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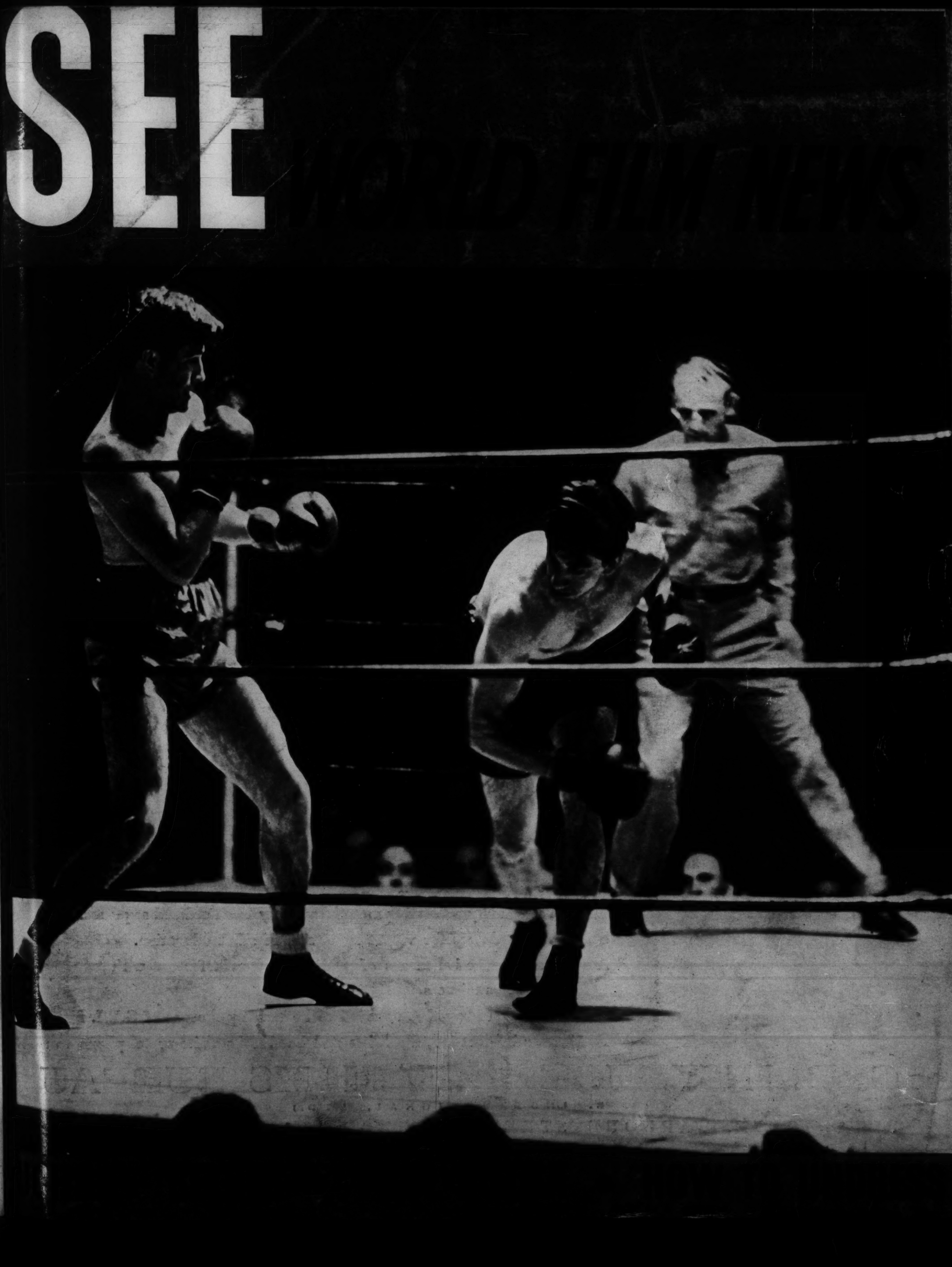

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SEPTEMBER 1938

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VOODOO JAM SESSION

Latch on to Fats Waller and other Killer Dillers with STAN PATCHETT

"THE old left hand isn't what it was," said the young man with the untidy hair and the baggy trousers.

"You make me sick," said my wife with some heat, "Can't you see he's doing the thing he wants to do and playing the way he feels like playing?"

She had just finished reading Dorothy Baker's *Young Man With a Horn* and felt that at last she knew the true significance of *le jazz hot*.

It was the second house at the London Palladium, and we were standing at the back of the stalls watching Fats Waller go through his act.

They were both wrong, of course. I had never heard Fats in better form, and he was playing the way he knew his audience would appreciate it best, for Fats, like most negro performers, is a born showman.

Showmanship and swing music were as far removed as your third cousin Annie till Cabell "Hi de Hi" Calloway clowned and yowled his way to fame. After that it was every cat for himself.

Slang nutty America has recently coined a brand new name for the exhibitionistic swing man—killer diller.

Ex-soda clerk, Gene Krupa, former star drummer with Benny Goodman and now leading his own outfit, is Killer Diller No. 1.

Soaked in perspiration and muttering: "Lyonnaise potatoes and *some* pork chops!" over and over again as he battered out his killer diller rhythms for the Goodman band, Krupa was a wow with the college boys and girls, but just a pain-on-the-drums to that newest menace to sane journalism—the swing music critic.

Seeing that this article—which started out as a review of the Fats Waller act at the Palladium—has now taken it on itself to introduce swing to the readers of this paper, it might be as well to go back to the beginning of swing—to try and give you some idea of what it's all about, for, believe you me, there are very few who *do* know what it is all about!

Take a map of the southern states of America, place your thumb over the spot marking New Orleans, capital of the state of Louisiana, and you have under your thumb the birthplace of jazz.

Various writers have named in turn, W. C. Handy, King Oliver, The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, and even Red Nichols, as the originators of swing music, but the honour goes to picturesque Jelly Roll Morton.

Jelly Roll was swinging the musical form now known as jazz as far back as 1902—long before the others came on the rhythm scene.

"King Porter Stomp," to-day a stand-by with all swing bands, was written and published in 1906. The following year a number called "Georgia Swing" was the rage around New Orleans.

A lot of far fetched stories have been told about the origin of the "St. Louis Blues." Actually it was written in 1911 by Guy Williams, a guitarist in Handy's band—he called himself "Professor" Handy in those days—and was titled "Jogo Blues." Handy had it published under its original title, but later changed it to "The St. Louis Blues" and put his own name on it. Copyright laws and morals were lax in bawdy, gaudy New Orleans.

The blues were being sung and played around New Orleans at the latter end of the eighteenth century. Happy Galloways was a famous blues singer of this period.

Crazy Buddy Bolden, the first of the jazz Gabriels, used to play the blues so loud on his cornet that the plaintive notes could be heard 12 miles away. Buddy blew his top and ended up in an asylum, a fate that befell many early swing players.

By 1912 the jazz rash was spreading all over America like a plague. Bands playing on the river boats that paddled their dreamy way up the Mississippi infected listeners with the jungle beat of the strong brown feet.

So far, so good. Having now absorbed the fact that jazz is a form of music that is written down on paper and preserved for as long as desired, we come to the question that catches most of 'em with the britches well down—just what *is* swing?

Swing is taking a recorded or remembered tune and creating your own musical pattern as you play. A really great swing man never repeats the same chorus twice, but there are those who will repeat a phrase, or riff, over and over again if it tickles their musical fancy. As in writing, the musical cliché will invariably bring disaster to its originator. The Quintette of the Hot Club of France, which features brilliant violinist Stephane Grappelly and amazing guitarist Django Reinhardt—and I use the superlatives with discretion—is at the moment suffering from an overdose of clichés but they are sure to snap out of it as they are both sincere musicians.

SWING, or creative jazz, has the advantage (for the listener) of being based on simple melodies that leave plenty of scope for your swing man to weave his melodic magic around.

So you see, jazz and swing are one and the same thing, but the music produced by such inspired swing artists as Louis Armstrong, Coleman Hawkins, Eddie Lang, Joe Venuti, Teddy Wilson, Benny Goodman, Bix Beiderbecke, Jack Teagarden, Meade Lux Lewis, Jimmy Noone, Fats Waller, Joe Sullivan, Red Norvo, Fletcher Henderson and Don Redman—to name just a few—will live a thousand times longer than the original melodies churned out by razor witted song writers of Tin Can Alley.

SWING first hits you like a jab in the arm with a hypodermic. I've already told over the air how I first became interested in swing music eleven years ago on a rainy night in Chicago.

I'd been to the Dempsey-Tunney fight and had wandered into a speak-easy afterwards to try and erase the memory of the comeback that had failed.

Everybody was talking about the fight, so I went into the back room where a bunch of fellows were standing around a battered Victrola, talking and drinking, and playing through a stack of records worn white with constant use.

I sat at the table in a corner and listened to the talk going on around me. Most of it was about the musicians who played on the records, and I remember it intrigued me that the playing of a simple melody like a jazz tune warranted any criticism.

One record in particular was played over and over again. A clarinet was the solo instrument and there was speculation as to who the player was.

Even I could share their enthusiasm—there was courage and rhythm in the playing that had its parallel in the panther-like grace of Dempsey.

"Who's the player?" everybody kept asking. Nobody knew.

Finally somebody said: "Get Joe, he'll know."

Joe was the barman. He listened to the record—head cocked on one side, foot tapping out the rhythm of "The Dallas Blues."

"It's Benny Goodman," he said finally, "He was only a kid in short pants when I knew him, but I'd know his playing anywhere."

I got talking to Joe the barman afterwards. He didn't play himself, but he was a mine of information on jazz and jazz musicians—the original hot rhythm fan.

When he saw that my interest was aroused, names tumbled from his enthusiastic lips in a cascade. Goodman was O.K., but if I wanted to hear a clarinet player that really gave you

Fats Waller.

SWING MUSICIAN'S SLANG

is bewildering and picturesque. Here are some quotations from Cab Calloway's "Cat-ologue", a "Hepsters" dictionary:

barrelhouse	*free and easy*
boogie-woogie	*heavy bass harmony*
belly fiddle	*guitar*
break it up	*to stop the show*
bring down	*depressing*
cat	*swing musician*
clambake	*every man for himself*
corny	*old fashioned*
doghouse	*bass fiddle*
dicty	*high class*
gob stick	*clarinet*
gate	*a swing man*
gutbucket	*low-down music*
hep cat	*someone who knows the answers*
icky	*opposite to the above*
iron-works	*vibraphone*
in the groove	*perfect*
jitter bug	*swing fan*
jive	*to kid along*
jam	*improvised swing music*
latch on	*get wise*
long hair	*classical musician*
licks	*hot musical phrases*
mellow	*fine*
ofay	*a white person*
off the cob	*corny*
out of this world	*perfect*
rock me	*send me*
reefer	*marihuana*
rug cutter	*a very good dancer*
schmaltz	*sweet music*
send	*arouse the emotions*
viper	*one who smokes reefers*
weed	*marihuana*
woodpile	*xylophone*

the burn, I should wander along to a joint called "The Nest" and get a load of a spade by the name of Jimmy Noone.

Even straight musicians used to haunt "The Nest" because Noone, besides being such a "hot" player, was also a master technician.

Maurice Revel used to listen to Noone night after night and had expressed the opinion that his style was years in advance of other musicians.

Joe also wanted me to go with him to Sam Beer's famous café, "The Three Deuces," to hear another great clarinet player named Frank Teschmaker, Joe Sullivan, a marvellous pianist and young Gene Krupa, a noisy and exuberant drummer.

I never went, and had to leave Chicago the next day but the swing fever was in my blood and has stayed with me ever since.

There's one thing I would make clear—swing is no lady of high degree—she's a Bessie Cotter, with a liking for the bottle, a great big hand for the boys and a figure of generous proportions that's starting to go to fat.

Take her for what she's worth and you'll have lots of laughs, but start to get scientific and find what makes the wheels go round and you'll come up against a wall that's too blank to be believable.

We started with Fats Waller, so it's fitting that we finish with him.

A customer in a cabaret once objected to the noise made by Fats' foot as he beat out a rhythm in time with his flying fingers on the keys.

Flashing him a big grin, Fats replied:

"I'll take mah shoe off, suh, but mah ole foot keeps right on a-tappin'!"

That's swing—you may scorn it, sicken of it, despise it, but your foot will keep on a-tapping just the same.

GOOD OLD STYMIE BEARD

Your favourite film actor may be Paul Muni, or Spencer Tracy, or Greta Garbo, but that's because your ideas on screen acting are all wrong.

RUSSELL FERGUSON has found his ideal screen actor; someone you have never heard of up till now. You may think, after reading this article, that there is no such person, so we have taken the precaution of putting his picture on these pages. He's sitting down.

TELL me, who is your favourite actor in the movies?

Do you remember when Our Gang took the carpets out on the lawn to beat them, and then went and fetched the lawn-mower?

What about it?

Do you remember the man about four years old who wagged his head and said "They'll never learn"?

Sure I remember. What's his name?

Spanky McFarland, my favourite actor except Stymie Beard.

But who is your favourite movie actor, really.

I just told you, Spanky McFarland or Stymie Beard, I don't know which.

But they're only kids. What about Paul Muni?

Well, he's good too, but not as good as Stymie Beard.

But that's silly, Stymie Beard would have been no use in Emile Zola.

It's nothing of the kind, silly. Paul Muni would be no use in Our Gang.

But these kids are only kids.

So what? Paul Muni is only a man, and Katharine Hepburn is only a woman, and Asta is only a dog. Only kids isn't an argument.

Ah, you make me laugh. Stymie Beard.

I can prove it though.

Well, prove it. Prove that he's better than Paul Muni.

Easy. Have you ever seen Stymie Beard give a bad performance? No. For that matter have you ever seen him in a bad picture? No. Have you ever seen Paul Muni give a bad performance? Yes. In *The Good Earth* you said yourself he was a ham most of the time, walking about with his toes turned out and a silly smile on his face. I don't blame him for it, but he was a ham all the same.

Ah, this is just one of your stunts. At that rate, Asta is about the best actor in Hollywood.

Well, so he is. And Rin Tin Tin and Snookey and Tom Mix's horse, all good actors. A horse is never a ham. Do you not remember when William S. Hart used to stand twisting his hat over the grave of some desert flower, and his horse used to stand at his elbow just showing him how to act? He got so like his horse in the end that he was a pretty good actor.

That's been a joke since about 1924.

You mean it's been a fact since about 1924.

Well, never mind the horses. Get back to Our Gang. It's silly to talk about them, they're not even the best of kids.

Well, who is?

Shirley Temple, obviously.

What at?

At acting. She can sing and dance and play the piano.

And since when was that acting?

If it's not acting, what is it?

Vaudeville.

Quibbling now.

Nothing of the kind. You have to keep to one thing at a time, or you get all mixed up. Take Alice Faye and Virginia Bruce, both about the same height and weight, one a crooner and the other an actress. Are you going to say that Alice Faye is the better actress because she can put across a torch song? She said herself the other day, Garbo is Garbo, but I'm only one verse and two choruses.

Well, what about Shirley Temple? She's an actress, isn't she?

Haven't I told you that all kids are movie actors and actresses? It's not the actress bit of Shirley Temple that puts her away up top, it's the vaudeville bit of her. With Deanna Durbin it's concert arias, with Judy Garland it's scat-singing. It has to be something. On the basis of plain acting, kids are all about the same, and all marvellous.

How can they be all marvellous if they're all about the same?

It's just one of those things. Tigers are all marvellous and all about the same. Tiger tiger burning bright, tiger tiger burning bright.

First it's horses, then it's burning tigers. Let's get back to the kids. Anybody would think you could just walk into the street, grab a kid, and make a movie actor out of him, just like that.

Well, so you can. Did you read how they found Tommy Kelly for Tom Sawyer? It was just like that. Playing football on a vacant lot. This was after they had measured the ears and noses of half the kids in America. Then they whistle one in off the street, and he is just what they want.

But I thought Tommy Kelly was a sensational discovery, quite unique.

Everybody is a sensational discovery, and everybody is quite unique. That's what makes the movies go round and round.

Well, if they can get kids as easy as that, why can't they get adults the same way?

They can and they do, and they keep telling you about it. How I got my start in the movies. I was waiting in the outer office, and a big executive came out and said Hey you. I was selling hot dogs, and a big executive came up and said Hey you. I was cleaning windows and a big executive came over and said Hey you. Two elements are common to all the stories, and these two elements are big executive and hey you.

And what happens after that?

Wash and brush up, shave, polish, film actor.

I thought they got a screen test or something.

Ah, yes, that's to see if they can stand up, sit down, turn round and smile. If they get through the test with flying colours, they're all right. Even if they don't it's not hopeless. W. C. Fields made a comedy once in which he was so ill that he could not stand, sit or turn, but since it was a movie it was all right. The movies are so synthetic that they can fix up the lame, the halt and the blind so that you'd never notice.

Well, that's not what the actors say.

WHAT do you expect the actors to say? They talk about their careers and so on, you don't expect them to blow the gaff. In any case the movies are an unblowable gaff. Jackie Coogan blew it in *The Kid*, but nobody noticed. Our Gang blows it every time it appears on the screen and nobody notices. Asta is blowing it now, twice over, once by coming over from America to make a picture, and again by going back to America before the picture's finished and leaving the rest to a stand-in. Next thing, they'll be bringing a tennis racket from America to feature in some big film. They could do it, if they set their minds to it.

Well, after all that, I still think it takes personality and intelligence to be a film actor.

Nobody denied it. Personality is a thing everybody has some of, and as for the intelligence, Stymie Beard is the measure of the amount required. This just means that a normal film actor has about ten times as much intelligence as he needs for his job. That is what fed Leslie Howard up. He kept asking why am I standing this way, why am I to smile, tell me a bit of the story, and he kept on being bawled out for insubordination, and finally he packed in, and came to this country to direct.

Why do you always talk about the movies as if there was something wrong with them?

I'm not knocking the movies. I'm only saying how they work, it seems to me. You started it with your question about my favourite actor, and I tell you Stymie Beard, and go on to say pretty nearly everybody is my favourite actor, and what is acting anyway, on the movies? Just go there, come here, stand still, look up a little to the left, hold it, down with your chin, hold it. Then you think I must be knocking the actors. You start off with the old assumption that the actors make the movies.

The publicity boys sold you that idea when they invented stars, twenty-five years ago. They sell you William Powell so that you'll go and see him next time because you saw him last time. Now when you ask me my favourite actor I could have said William Powell, it's just as true. Favourite actor. You might as well ask me my favourite colour.

THE movies make the actors. Nobody knows better than the actors themselves. They kick against it, too. I told you how Leslie Howard reacted. The latest news from America is that Myron Selznick is trying to rally them in a co-operative production scheme, against the big bosses. The big bosses reply, We made you, and if you walk out on us we'll make another bunch just as good. The actors reply is, Maybe so, but we're made now, and meanwhile we'll be cleaning up.

Another thing, Louis Calhern and Jack La Rue have come to England to act in *Golden Boy*, partly because at least they are tired of being made into bad men by the movies. But typing is an old story. You know it all, but you forget that making stars is just a form of typing.

Knocking the stars would be silly in any case. Did not Edgar Kennedy say the other day that if a picture is bad, it's not the actor's fault? And isn't this pretty true? The ball no question makes of ayes and nos.

Meaning what?

Meaning, don't knock the actor, he's only a stooge. Anyway, I'm a sucker for them—I admire all the men, nearly, am in love with all the women, nearly, and dote on all the children, nearly.

Well, after all that, who *is* your favourite actor?

I told you, Stymie Beard.

You're sticking to that?

Stymie Beard, Stymie Beard, good old Stymie Beard.

I thought you liked William Powell?

So I do, and Pat O'Brien, and Melvyn Douglas and Zasu Pitts.

Well, why pick on Stymie Beard?

Because I don't see his name screaming at me from every newspaper I lift, like William Powell. I will not be bossed by the publicity boys.

Sales resistance, eh?

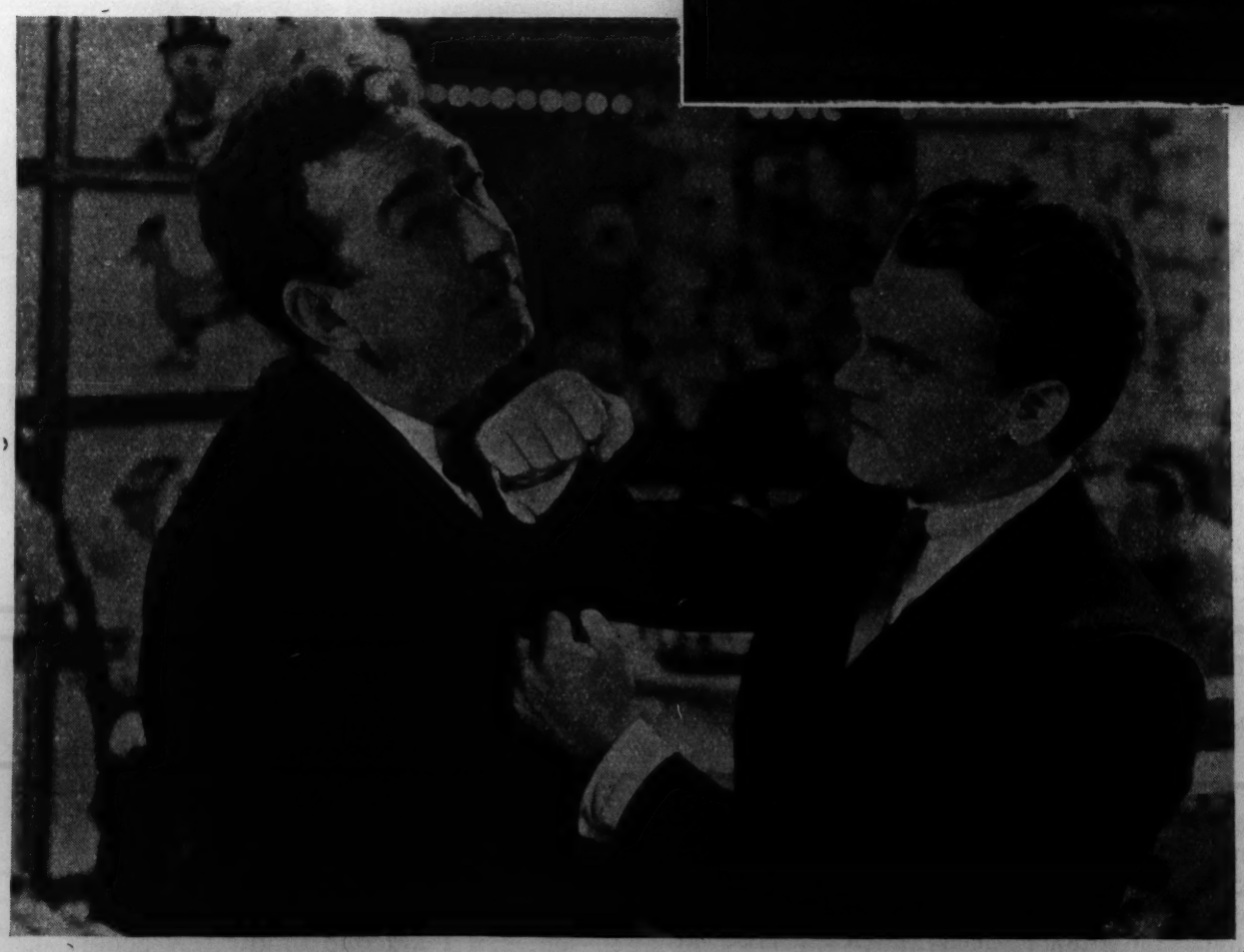
Sales resistance. I found out his name for myself, and I am one of the few people in the world who know it. It's a nice name, too.

What is?

Stymie Beard.

CAGNEY is TOUGH ENOUGH

by Gilbert Seldes



Top right: James Cagney and Marie Wilson, starring in 'Boy Meets Girl', the new Warner Bros. film. Above: A scene from an early Cagney film, 'Taxi'.

THE one thing Hollywood can't get over is that it has an actor in its population. Almost apologetically, the fact is mentioned, but not in those words. The usual expression is: "Cagney isn't tough off the screen." The accents of surprise at this bewildering fact are touching; the press agents who have written about James Cagney are gratified because it gives them a new slant, but even they can't quite see what it leads to. It leads, of course, to the fact that Cagney is an actor. Apparently that comes under the heading of news in Hollywood.

Actually, Cagney isn't entirely alone. His only rival in the presentation of gangsters, Edward G. Robinson, isn't tough, either; he is known as an art collector and lover of music (and can, incidentally, render a comic Bronx accent to perfection). But Hollywood is more accustomed to the buildup of personality. The Press agents can't quite say that Lily Languor is a heartbreaker with a capital B and four dashes for the unprintable letters; but if John Wholesome's next picture shows him in a particularly manly role, you can be sure that the public will be asked to

believe that the part is peculiarly sympathetic to Mr. Wholesome's nature. The net result of this sort of thing can be dangerous; Paul Muni, who is an actor, is being handed over to the public as a sort of dedicated votary of high thoughts who doesn't create the part of Zola, but is "living the part". If he can live the part, he doesn't need any talent whatever.

The toughness of James Cagney is a particularly pleasant thing on the screen because it is created; it is the result of a talent, not of "personality". But there is plenty of toughness behind it—tough mental fibre, a hard-headed, bunkless, alert temperament. I use the word "temperament" because it is correct, because the central fact about Cagney is the outlook on the world developed by his experience and character; but it has nothing whatever to do with the "artistic temperament", an ancient fake raised to semi-divinity in recent years by our clamour for picturesque personalities. The artistic temperament led a notable, now dead, movie star to demand in his written contract that he should not be required to sit on cold stone benches; the artistic temperament is always busy about private things and never about art. It leads pretty and popular actresses to break contracts with their studios because "they aren't giving me suitable stories" which usually means (*a*) that the actress is being asked to act, instead of exploiting her charms; or (*b*—and more annoying) that some other actress has been assigned to a particularly rich rôle. Cagney got out of a contract, too, but it wasn't for reasons like that. He was being put into too many pictures of the same sort (which prevented him from giving any range to his acting) and he was making more pictures than he felt able to make. His way of breaking the contract was to take it to the courts. And for over a year he was virtually outside the pale of Hollywood because he won his battle. If it hadn't been for the accidental formation of a new company which needed his talent, he would have made no pictures during the time he fought for his rights. It was a hard thing for an actor to do, and the hardest thing for Cagney to bear was that he wasn't working. He wasn't penniless, but the amount he lost by not working regularly was enough to frighten most of us at income-tax time; I suppose that bothered him, but I know it was never uppermost in his mind. He wanted earnestly to get back to work; he is back now, with his old company, Warners, and the pictures announced for him are excellent. The first one, in fact, is *Boy Meets Girl* (for which the Spewacks have, I am told, improved their flawless original).

His compact little body is agile and graceful; he was a hoofer and a good one; his eyes are bright and darting (they are one of the most effective elements in his work on the screen); his voice is not at all exceptional, but he can suddenly lower it to express emotion or to throw a jet of corrosive acid over what he has said before, so that you have to wait for the end of whatever he is saying to make sure whether he means it, or is kidding it. Most famous, and most effective, are his hands, with which he has built up a series of singularly private, singularly communicative, gestures. I found, in talking to him, that at the end of fifteen minutes I was unconsciously imitating his movements, especially the little shake of his hands, held breast-high, which occurs at least once in most of his pictures. I thought I had better be frank about it, so that he didn't imagine I was burlesquing him, and asked him how he had developed that particular gesture. He said, "I'm never conscious of it." It is, in fact, the one movement he makes without knowing it, the only one not directly growing out of the character he plays; and I shouldn't be surprised if he dropped it for that reason. What pleased me was his refusal to build up the opportunity I offered him, to deliver a mystical statement on the actor's art. (He was once asked to deliver an hour's lecture on the subject and, privately, gave a series of devastating imitations of its most famous practitioners.)

Sunk deep in the life story of Cagney there is one episode which may explain the totally unhistrionic impression he makes: he was a bell hop at the Friars Club in New York. He saw actors at close range, in private life among other actors; which means that he saw them acting their heads off. He got from them no ambition to be an actor himself; he wanted to be an artist. But when he became an actor, he at least knew where to act—on the stage. He never picked up any of the snobbery of the stage, either.

For his fourth picture, they gave him *Public Enemy*, so the world may give thanks to Darryl Zanuck, who was then in charge of production at Warner's and who had suddenly discovered that the gangsters were first-class picture material. (You bet they were: they were the Western and the serial rolled into one, with headlines instead of history in the background.) There he was, this bantam, lean and swift in his movements, being tough and standing up to hard men; he was so good that for a time he wiped off the record all the photographs we had ever seen of actual gangsters; he was so good that he created one of the extremely rare exceptions to the rule that what you remember of a talking picture is always something seen, not something heard; his cry near the very end, "Maybe I wasn't so tough!" is remembered; but best of all is the total memory of the figure moving, with concentrated purpose, knowing where to go and what to get, and going and getting it.

After that, they had him slapping women around (the grape-fruit in the face was in *Public Enemy*) until it became news when a woman slapped him in a picture; they had him playing hard and masterful little guys with Pat O'Brien as his partner; they had him driving a truck or a taxi; they had him hard-beset in *Ceiling Zero*. Looking them over, you say that the films, after the first one, weren't so much; but he was in them. During his exile he made a picture in which he was a municipal inspector of weights and measures, and even that was palatable because he was there, moving.

Mr. Reinhardt who made everyone else proceed magnificently through *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was beaten by the comedians, Cagney among them, who stuck to the rhythm and pace of the movies, and were the best element in the picture. So long as Cagney is allowed to move, expressively, you have the ground-work of a good movie; he was born for the movies, because whatever he wants to say, he says by movement. His gait, the hunch of his shoulders, the way he turns, the jab of a finger, the cocking of his head, are all exactly what the movies require. There aren't half a dozen players on the screen who come within fifty feet of him in the variety and range and expressiveness of movement.

When he was in New York, just before returning to Hollywood, he spent a lot of time at the American School of the Ballet; he watched Paul Draper dance; he went to see the great master of controlled movement, Uday Shankar. I am pretty sure that if the right thing had come along at the moment, he would have returned to dancing professionally. He had danced, and well enough, in his last picture; he could say a lot, dancing. But I'm glad he went back to the pictures. No one is quite indispensable, but the movies need Cagney badly; they need the kind of intelligence about people and situations which shines through all his appearances.

That is the entertaining paradox of the whole business, that Cagney, who conceals his personality, has a thousand times the reality of those who exploit theirs. That makes him a living lesson in the art of acting—which few will bother to learn. And they won't get instruction from him, except by watching. He takes nothing to himself. On the day he saw Shankar dance, a friend took him backstage and a news photographer snapped a picture of Shankar and Cagney together. A woman, a lover of art I am sure, turned to Cagney and asked him how he got into the picture with Shankar. "I happened to be standing there," said Cagney. The woman turned away, remarking, "Oh, I thought you were someone I ought to know." "Not at all," Cagney threw after her.

But the newsboys and bootblacks on the street had recognised him and shouted to him, and he had answered them, with pleasure.

★ ★ ★

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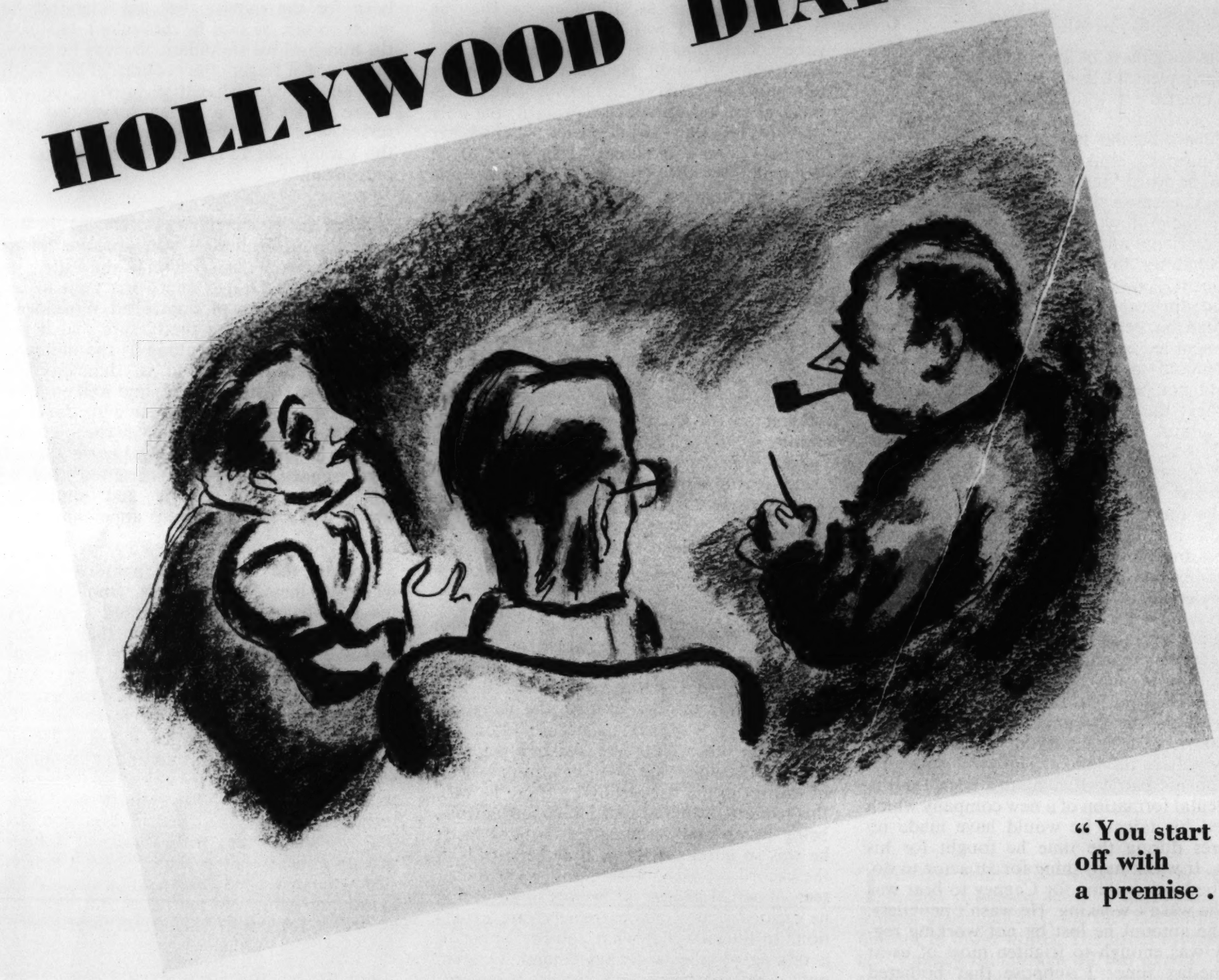
HOLLYWOOD DIARY



"You start off with a premise . ."

April 26. For ten days I have been sitting around in my two-room office, waiting for some producer on the lot to call me up and put me to work on a script. Every morning I walk the distance from my apartment on Orchid Avenue and appear at the studio promptly at nine. The other writers pass my window an hour or so later, see me ready for work in my shirt sleeves and suspenders, and yell jovially "Scab." But I don't want to miss that phone call.

I sent my secretary back to the stenographic department and told her I'd call her when I needed her. It was embarrassing with the two of us just sitting there and waiting.

Naturally I can't expect an organization of this size to stop everything until I'm properly placed, but they pay me two hundred dollars a week, and I do nothing to earn it. Himmer, my agent, tells me I'm getting "beans" and have no reason to think of the waste of money.

The main thing is not to grow demoralized and cynical.

•

A letter came from home: "Hollywood must be different and exciting. Which actress are you bringing East for a wife?"

In the evening I walk down Hollywood Boulevard with all the other tourists, hoping for a glimpse of Carole Lombard and Adolphe Menjou. And after I get tired of walking I drop into a drugstore, where, with the lonely ladies from Iowa, I secretly drink a thick strawberry soda.

April 27. The telephone rang to-day but it was only the parking-lot attendant across the street. He wanted to know why I hadn't been using the parking space the studio assigned to me. I explained I had no car, which left him bewildered.

The truth is I can't buy one. When I left New York I owned a five-dollar bill and had to borrow six hundred dollars from my agent to pay my debts and get out here respectably.

My agent is collecting his six hundred dollars in weekly instalments of fifty dollars. Also taking nips out of my check are his twenty dollar weekly commission, the Cali-

He got two hundred dollars a week—working for "beans" his agent called it—a two-roomed office, a stenographer and no work to do. But he was kicking just the same, and complained of a weird, dreamlike feeling.

Daniel Fuchs, American author of *Neptune's Beach* and *Homage to Blenholt*, gives a day-to-day account of a writer's sojourn in Hollywood, the authors' Shangri La; afternoon tea, a nap, and malted milk with three scoops of ice cream

★ ★ ★

fornia unemployment tax, the federal old-age relief tax, and the Motion Picture Relief Fund, so that what actually comes to me isn't two hundred dollars at all, and it would take some time to get enough money together for a car.

With all these cuts I'm still making more money than I ever earned per week. Just the same, I'm kicking. The trouble is I suppose, that it's misleading to think of salary in weekly figures when you work on the movies. Hardly anyone works fifty-two weeks a year; my own contract lasts thirteen weeks.

Still no telephone calls from any producer.

April 28. Himmer, my agent, dropped in. He doesn't seem worried by inactivity. "The check comes every week, doesn't it?" he asks. "It's good money, isn't it?"

April 29. I was put to work this morning. Mara, a sad-looking man who produces B pictures for the studio, asked me to do a "treatment" of a story called *No Bread to Butter*. This is an "original"—a twenty-page synopsis of a picture for which the studio paid fifteen hundred dollars. Mara had put some other writers to work on treatments, but hadn't liked what they'd done any better than he liked the original. I didn't understand at all. Why had he bought *No Bread to Butter* if it was no good, I asked him. Mara smoked his cigar patiently for a while. "Listen," he said, "do I ask you personal questions?"

He wouldn't tell me what was wrong with the original or what he wanted. "The whole intention in the matter is to bring on a writer with a fresh approach. If I talk, you'll go to work with preconceived notions in your head. Tell the story as you see it and we'll see what comes out."

I went back to my office. *No Bread to Butter* seems to be a badly manufactured story, but I'm anxious to see what I can do with it. I feel good, a regular writer now, with an assignment. It appears to worry the other writers that I have found something to do at last. They seemed fonder of me when I was just hanging around.

I phoned Himmer to tell him the good news. "See?" he said. "Didn't I tell you I'd take care of it? You let me handle everything and don't worry." He talked with no great enthusiasm.

May 5. The boys tell me I'm a fool to hand in my treatment so soon. Two or three weeks are the minimum time, they say. but I was anxious to get the work done to show Mara what I could do. Mara's secretary said I should hear from him in the morning.

May 6. Mara did not phone.

May 10. No phone.

May 11. No phone.

May 12. Mr. Barry phoned. He's assistant to the vice-president in charge of production and represents the front office. He called me at my apartment last night, after work. "Listen here, kid," he said, "I've been trying to reach you at your home all day. You've been out on the Coast a month now. Don't you think its time you showed up on the lot?"

I protested, almost tearfully.

Seems that the administration building checked up on the absences of writers by the report sent in by the parking-lot attendant. Since I had no car, I hadn't been checked in. I explained, but Barry hung up, sounding unconvinced.

May 13. Nothing.

The malted milks in this town are made with three full scoops of ice cream. Opulence.

May 14. Mara finally called me in to-day, rubbed his nose for a few minutes, and then told me my treatment was altogether too good. "You come in with a script," he explained. "It's fine, it's subtle, it's serious. It's perfect—for Gary Cooper, not for my kind of talent."

I tried to get Mara to make a stab at the script anyhow, but nothing doing. Naturally, I'm not especially depressed.

May 17. Barry, front-office man, called me up again, this time at my office. He told me Mara had sent in an enthusiastic report on me. I was a fine writer—"serious"—and fit only for A producers. Barry, who is taking "personal charge" of me, told me to see St. John, one of the company's best producers.

St. John's secretary made an appointment for me for the morning. She seemed to know who I was.

May 18. St. John gave me a cordial welcome and told me he's been wanting to do a historical frontier picture but has been held up because he can't find the right character. He's been hunting for three years now and asked me to get to work on the research.

I told him frankly I didn't imagine I'd be very successful with this, but he brushed my objections aside.

I'm back at the office and don't know exactly what to do. I don't want to spend time on anything as flimsy as this assignment. Nevertheless, I phoned the research department and asked them to send me everything they had on the early West. This turns out to be several very old books on Texas. I go through them with no great interest.

May 19. Still Texas. Sometimes, when I stop to see myself sitting in a room and reading books on Texas, I get a weird, dreamlike feeling.

Frank Coleman, one of the writers I've come to know, dropped in and asked me to play a little casino with him, five cents a hand. We played for about half an hour.

May 21. Inter-office memo from St. John: "The front office tells me their program for the year is full and they have no room for an expensive frontier picture. Sorry."

I WAS struck again with the dreamlike quality of my work here.

Frank Coleman, who dropped in for some casino, explained St. John's note. When a writer goes to work for a producer, the writer's salary is immediately attached to the producer's budget. St. John simply didn't want to be responsible for my salary.

[*Continued on next page*

At any rate, I'm glad to be free of the Texas research.

May 24. Barry, front-office man, sent me to another producer, Marc Wilde, who gave me the full shooting script of *Dark Island*, which was made in 1926 as a silent picture. "My thought," said Wilde, "is to shoot the story in a talking version. However, before I put you to work on it, I want to find out what you think of it, whether you care to work on it, etc. So read it."

May 25. I didn't like *Dark Island* at all, but I didn't want to antagonize Wilde by being too outspoken. I asked him what he thought of it. "Me?" Wilde asked. "Why ask me? I haven't read the script."

Coleman and I play casino every afternoon now.

May 26. I've been coming to work at nine-thirty lately and to-day I walked in at ten. All the boys seem to like me now, and it is well-intentioned friendship, too. They pick me up at twelve for lunch at the commissary, where we all eat at the "round table". That is, the lesser writers ($100–$500) eat at a large round table. The intermediates ($500–$750) eat privately or off the lot. The big shots eat at the executives' table along with top-flight stars and producers. They shoot crap with their meals.

We're at lunch from twelve to two. Afterwards we tour the lot for an hour or so in the sunshine, just walking around and looking at the sets in the different barns. Then it takes us a half-hour to break up at the doorway to the writers building. When we finally go to our separate offices the boys generally take a nap. I took one, too, to-day. Coleman comes in at four for half hour's play at the cards and then we meet the other boys again at the commissary for afternoon tea, which amounts to a carbonated drink called 7 up. This leaves me a few minutes for these notes; I put my hat on and go home.

May 28. My finger nails seem to grow very rapidly. It may be the climate or simply because I have more time to notice them.

June 1. Very lazy. I read picture magazines from 10.30 until 12. After that the day goes fast enough.

June 3. The story editor called me up to-day and said that Kolb wants to see me. Kolb is second or third-ranking producer on the lot: when I mentioned the news to the boys, they all grew silent and ill at ease with me. No casino, no tour, no tea.

Appointment with Kolb in the morning. Himmer, who dropped in, seemed impressed. "Kid," he said, "this is your big chance."

June 4. Kolb strikes me as a man who knows what he wants and how to get it. He is a short man, conscious of his shortness. He stands on his toes when he talks for the sake of the height, and punches out his words.

It seems that I have to take a special course of instruction with him before he will put me to work. We spent an hour to-day in friendly conversation, mainly an autobiographical sketch of Kolb, together with lessons drawn therefrom for my own knowledge. I'm to return to his office after the week-end.

Coleman passed me and didn't speak.

June 6. To-day Kolb described his system to me. You start off with a premise.

"Just for the sake of example," he said, "you take a girl who always screams when she sees a milkman. See, she's got a grudge against the milkman because a dearly beloved pet dog was once run over by a milk cart." Something like that—good comedy situation. Only, first you must invent a springboard. This is the scene which starts the picture, and Kolb wants it intriguing, even mystifying. "I'm not afraid of any man, big or small," he said, "but I shake in my shoes when that skinny little guy in the movie theatre begins to reach under the seat for his hat." The function of the springboard is to hold the skinny man in his seat. "For example, purely for example, suppose we show the boy when the picture opens. See, he's walking into the Automat. He goes to the cake slot. He puts in two nickels or three nickels, as the case may be. The slot opens and out comes—the girl! Is that interesting? Will the skinny guy take the hat? No, he wants to know how that girl got there and what's going to happen now."

Kolb started to continue with the complications his springboard made possible, but was still fascinated by the Automat girl. He considered for a while and then said "What the hell. It's nuts." Then he seemed to lose interest in the lesson. "Listen," he finally said, "the best way to know what I want is to see the actual products. You go down and see the stuff I've made." He told his secretary to make arrangements.

June 7. Kolb's secretary sent me to a projection room, where I was shown three of his pictures. I understand what Kolb means by springboards. His pictures all begin very well, some times with shock, but the rest of the plot is a mess because it has to justify the outrageous beginning.

June 8. Kolb's secretary phoned and told me I was to see three more Kolb *Operas*. I sit all by myself in a projection room, thinking of Ludwig of Bavaria in his exclusive theatre, and feeling grand too.

What impresses me is the extent to which these pictures duplicate themselves, not only in the essential material, but in many details of character, gags, plot, etc.

June 9. Three more pictures to-day.

June 10. More Kolb masterpieces. He has been in movies for twenty years and must have made a hundred pictures.

June 14. To-day I was rescued from the projection room and was put to work. Kolb really shone with enthusiasm for the assignment he was giving me.

His idea was to rewrite a picture he did two years ago called *Dreams at Twilight*. If it pulled them in once, he said, it would pull them in again. *Dreams at Twilight* involved a dashing, light-hearted hero who was constantly being chased by a flippant-minded girl. The hero deeply loved the girl, but avoided her because he was prejudiced against matrimony. "Sweet premise," Kolb said. "It's got charm, see what I mean?"

In addition to outwitting the heroine, the hero is fully occupied in the course of the picture: he is a detective and has a murder to solve.

"Now," said Kolb, "we remake the picture. *But*—instead of having the dashing boy detective, we make it a dashing girl this time. In other words, we make the picture in reverse. How's that for a new twist?"

He stood back in triumph and regarded my face for shock.

"Know why I'm changing the rôles?" he whispered. His whole manner suddenly became secretive. "This picture is for Francine Waldron!"

I began to tremble gently, not because Waldron was one of the three most important actresses in Hollywood but because Kolb's mood was contagious and I had to respond as a matter of common politeness. When he saw the flush of excitement on my face deepen on my face, he sent me off to work. He told his secretary to put me on a budget.

June 15. I finished a rough outline of the Waldron script, working hard on it—nine to five, and no drifting about the lot. It's a bare sketch but I'd like to get Kolb's reaction on it before going ahead. His secretary, however, told me that Mr. Kolb was all tied up at the moment.

I'm going ahead, filling in the outline rather than waste the time.

June 18. Phoned Kolb's secretary, but he's still busy.

That peculiar feeling of dreamy suspension is very strong with me lately.

June 20. "Hollywood Reporter" notes that Kolb has bought a property called *Nothing for a Dime*. It is described as a stop story in which a girl plays the part of a debonair detective usually assigned to a man.

What's going on?

June 21. Finished a forty-page treatment of the Waldron script and asked Kolb's secretary to show this to him, since he couldn't see me. She said he would get it immediately and would let me know very shortly.

June 22. Begins nothing again.

June 23. Nothing.

June 24. Frank Coleman dropped in for casino—a depressing sign.

June 25. Barry of the front office, called me in for a long personal interview. He told me that I was respected as a fine writer, held in high regard. Was everything—office accommodations—suitable in every way? Then he said that the studio was putting me entirely on my own, allowing me to work without restrictions or supervision. The point was, I was an artist and could work without shackles.

At this point I interrupted and told him about the script I had written for Kolb.

"Kolb?" Barry asked. "Who says you're working for Kolb? He has not got you listed as one of his writers. You've been marked 'available' for twenty-four days now."

Nevertheless, I insisted that the story editor had sent me to Kolb, I had worked with him, and was waiting to see what he thought of my story. Barry didn't understand at all. "K." he said uncertainly. "I'll see Kolb at once, and clear this all up."

More and more confusing. What impresses me though, is that I don't feel bewildered or affected in any way. It's as though I'm not the one who's concerned here. Other days, other places, I should have been, to put it mildly, raving. However, I did phone Himmer, my agent. He heard me out and said he would scout around and that I was not to worry.

June 29. Barry phoned. He had seen Kolb and Kolb didn't like my script. Would I please get to work on my unrestricted, unsupervised assignment.?

I didn't quite know how to begin on a thing like that and so I decided to make a beginning after the week-end. Went to the commissary for a soda and bumped into Kolb himself coming out. He beamed kindly at me. "Kid, I know what it is to wait around," he said. "I'm awfully busy at the moment but sooner or later I'll get around to reading your script." He patted my shoulder and left.

June 30. Himmer dropped in. "About that Kolb," he said. "I picked up the inside story. See, what it was was this: when Kolb put you on to his budget he called up to find out what your salary was. That's how he found out you get two hundred."

"So?"

"So. Kolb figures he deserves the best writers on the lot. He told them he wouldn't put up with any two-hundred dollar trash. Its a natural reaction."

We both sat there for a while, passing time and talking about the administration in Washington.

"By the way," Himmer asked, "what kind of a story did Kolb have you work on?"

"A business for Francine Waldron."

Himmer laughed genially. "Waldron has no commitments on this lot. She doesn't work here, you know."

We both laughed pleasantly at the strange mind Kolb had and what went on in it.

July 1. Nothing worth noting.

July 12. I asked Coleman over casino how the front office told you that you were fired. "They don't tell you," Coleman said. "They're supposed to pick up options two weeks before the contract expires. If they don't, they don't. That's all.

The two-week period with me began some days ago.

July 14. I keep coming to work, although I understand this isn't really necessary. But it's pleasant to see the boys who are touching in the solicitude for me.

July 15. I came to work at ten-thirty this morning and found a genial, eager chap sitting at my desk in his shirtsleeves. "There must be some mistake," he stammered. "I'm new here. They told me to take this office."

I assured him there was no mistake. He seemed to be a fine fellow, sincere and impatient to start work. We sat around and chatted for an hour or so.

While I cleaned up my desk, he had the embarrassed tact to leave me alone.

★ ★

Article by Daniel Fuchs reproduced by kind permission of 'The New Yorker'. Drawings by David Gwynn.

"From all appearances you would think she had spent her life undressing . . ."

HOW to UNDRESS

Sex rears its ugly head. Glen "Peeping Tom" Norris commentates on Hollywood's most ballyhood short of the year and answers the protesting namby-pambies of Fleet Street.

LONDON in the "dead" season of 1938. Empty streets, empty seats. In gold and marble foyers, long-faced cinemanagers glaring at knitting box-office girls. Inside, row upon row of blue plush staring up at Garbo, Gable, Donald Duck. When sun sparkles on summer blue water, there's no "beating the heat!" But there is! Just a few old ladies chattering about indecency over willow-pattern cups. Just a few news critics with nothing better to write about screaming CRUDE! VULGAR! DIRT! Just a titillating title on the hoardings. Hushed streets fill with a murmur of queues. STANDING ONLY. HOUSE FULL. Cinemanagers' hearts beat again to the rhythm of clinking shillings and half-crowns. Where Garbo, Gable, Donald Duck, failed, the serpent has wriggled through. Apparently thousands of Londoners want to know *How to Undress before Your Husband.*

New York in the "rush" season of 1937. Bright lights and klaxons down Broadway. Bile Beans blinking over Times Square. Leg shows in Manhattan are booming. Uncle George is razzing it while Aunt Julia is away in the country. In one of New York's smartest streamlined offices, cut off from the street by the bustle of typewriters and auditions, showman Allen Gilbert smokes a big cigar. He's the man who puts on the leg shows, and right now he's puffing and thinking. Not planning new ways of tickling Uncle George. For Allen Gilbert is going to have a crack at branching out into the noble world of education.

Next day in the smart, streamlined office. The "gentlemen of the press" lounging in chromium chairs. Behind a vast ebony and glass desk, Allen Gilbert, leaning back until his smoke rings blow straight up at the ceiling. He tips forward, sits up, leans seriously across his desk: "Gentlemen, I want to announce the formation of my school: The Allen Gilbert School of Undressing. I intend to enrol wives anxious to improve their marital manners, teach them the correct way to take off their clothes. Frankly, gentlemen, I am doing this as a social measure. I feel that many a marriage ends in the divorce court because the wife grows sloppy and careless in the bedroom. Already 48 wives, who suspect there is something wrong with their disrobing methodology, have signed up for my $30(£6) course of six lessons. From some of my best show girls they will learn how to transform the act of going to bed from a routine chore into a thing of charm, pleasure, and excitement. Gentlemen"—and Mr. Gilbert rises—"I am dedicating my school to the sanctity of the American home."

The lights flash out across Times Square. Posters flapping round the legs of shouting newsboys. Allen Gilbert in the headlines; pictures from his school splashing the front pages. Dark, demure "Professor" Connie Fonzlau demonstrating the wrong way: pulling her frock off over her head, letting her stockings wrinkle down over her ankles, showing too much too soon. Gay, blonde "Professor" June St. Clair showing the right way: snaking her frock down over her hips, rolling her stockings down, donning her nightgown and dropping her lingerie all in one magic motion. From coast to coast, America goggles, then smirks, then sniggers—and then comes the kick-back.

Three weeks after publishing the pictures, American weekly *Life* prints sample letters:

"I am thoroughly ashamed of you. Men have enough of a problem to keep their minds clean. Such pictures will not make their struggle for moral mastery any easier."

"My Gawd—ain't there nothin' sacred no more!"

"Why only the married women?"

"What about the husbands? How to get out of shirt and pants and into pyjamas 'all in one magic motion'? Are you sponsoring the return of the night shirt?"

Life takes up the challenge, sends out one of its female photographers to shoot the male disrobing. A bepaunched fatty removes trousers while still adorned with bowler hat and cigar, pulls his shirt over his head with one hand while back-scratching with the other, does grotesque physical jerks with a towel round his middle. By contrast, an amateur

". . . To the appreciative there is, in a scene like this, something truly uplifting . . ."

Robert Taylor smiles through every movement of turning-in with "dignity and charm."

Again the mail bags bulge:

"My young daughter, age 4, now suggests it would be nice to publish a series for children."

"Fer gawsh sakes! If you mustn't scratch in your own bedroom, where in the world can you? Or haven't you ever had an itch!!"

"The shirt should be removed before the pants. If you have a good tan and a manly chest, the vest should follow."

Hollywood, glittering through the spring of 1938. Trying to keep up the eternal brightness, and forget the shadow of the demon slump. These days, good stories are rare. Hollywood thinks the Allen Gilbert story is a good one, decides to produce a film version. It might have brought fame and fortune to Professors Fonzlau and St. Clair. But a strange coincidence gives Hollywood a far bigger break; and when the film bursts on a waiting world, its how and who makes big news.

THE pine-scented slopes of Hollywood's Beverly Hills. In a charming sun-trap bungalow, starlet Elaine Barrie is at last recovering from the strain of long months spent hurrying round the world. It was terribly tiring but tremendously touching to feel that the whole world was following every word of her romantic story. Then, as Mrs. Barrymore, she settled down to gay, carefree months basking in the glow of happy wedlock. But even the best wife must have her little secrets! Even the partner of the great lover must now and then long for a harmless headline or two! For when the screen *How to Undress* is complete, Hollywood is amazed to find that it is Elaine Barrie Barrymore, in her own name, who is showing how. The Barrymore family, elíte of stage and screen, are none too happy about the film. But the public must be served, and the film survives. So at last, as the howls, yowls, squeals, and ballyhoo reach a climax, Elaine Barrie Barrymore comes to show London *How to Undress in Front of Your Husband.*

Two one and sixes, please. What, nothing cheaper than three and six! How long to wait for the two and sixes? Have to join the end of the queue. But where *is* the end? Two blocks away, round the corner! Two three and sixes, please. Thank you. The organ dies away. The rainbow curtains part. British Board of Film Censors—How to Undress—A Certificate. A gentle whistle sighs round the theatre. A title on the screen asks:

HOW ABOUT OUR WOMEN?
DO THEY SATISFY US?

Apparently the inquirer is the camera keyhole peeper, screwing up his face, distorting his body, to get angles on the ladies in the boudoir. In his darkroom, feverishly he develops the film. The voice sounds a horrible warning:

"*The victim invariably ends up in the soup. Sometimes it's only the developing fluid, often it's the front page. It depends on who she is, what she did, and where she did it.*"

What the feverish young man finds on his negative is "Miss" Barrie, conveniently restored to the single state and bachelor quarters, returning at 6 a.m. from a Hollywood party. Judging from the grace of the Barrie glide to the dressing table, it was a very sober party. Miss Barrie begins. But just as she is about to solve the most important problem, we jump to the flat below. Miss Trixie Friganza is also returning from a party, but a much gayer one. She is magnificent. One mile round, and with a superb pair of chests. La Barrie may be a thoroughbred, but La Friganza is a stayer. So the race between them is on, with the feverish young man pointing the highlights:

"*Miss Barrie is an authority on undressing . . . notice the ease and grace . . . you'd think she had spent her life undressing . . . unquestionably she has 'it' . . . for didn't she capture the world's greatest lover! She not only knows how to get a husband . . . but how to keep him!*

"*Ah! There should be developments here . . . no . . . I'm afraid with Miss Friganza the developing has been round.*

"*It isn't what you artfully reveal, but what you artfully conceal that makes disrobing an intriguing art . . . in a scene like this there's something truly uplifting . . . a persistence in maintaining the lovely little tricks that every girl practises on her first sweetheart . . . now's she about to slip out of her slip.*

"*Now Trixie . . . that other celebrated taker-offer shows us a few other wrinkles . . . Trixie, we're holding you up as a colossal example of bedroom finesse . . . so let's get down to foundations.*

"*What's going on above . . . something coming off . . . she keeps you guessing as to what she'll do next . . . a trick that invariably intrigues a husband. Ah! A soft balmy night . . . dreamy music . . . and a touch . . . just the merest touch . . . how her husband must thrill to those charms! I think Trixie's worry is about over . . . in a few moments the dreadnought will drop anchor.*

"*Good night, Miss Barrie . . . and pleasant dreams.*

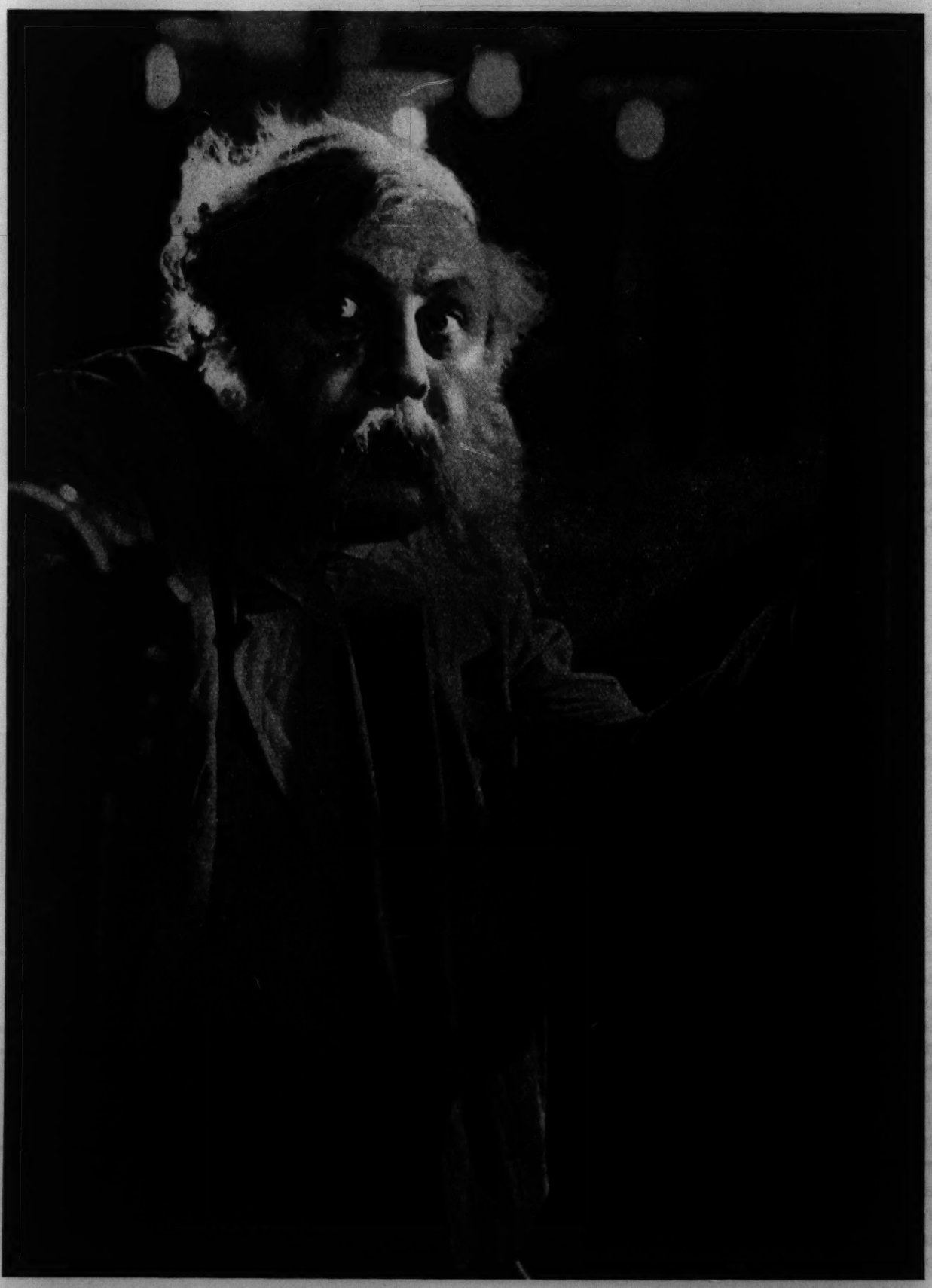
"*As for you, Trixie . . . a do not disturb sign.*"

And with that, a junior great lover, in a top hat, with a face not unlike Charlie McCarthy, appears from under Miss Barrie's bed, and waves a charming good night to us as the scene fades away.

So America presents us with this year's Public Bellylaff No. 1. But do we take it that way? Read those headlines again. Listen to the old ladies squealing. Hark at the news critics yowling. "Nasty!" "Crude!" "Vulgar!" "Insult!" "Indecent!" Now boys, boys, pull yourselves together! Has America got the laugh on us? Or has it!

IT'S in the *SCRIPT*

says Karl Mayer, famous German writer of 'Caligari', 'The Last Laugh', 'Berlin' and 'Sunrise', in a talk with Documentary producer PAUL ROTHA



The Last Laugh. *With Emil Jannings.*

HE can't keep still. He exudes enthusiasm for this thing called movie. Ten minutes talk and you realise that he has the background, the feeling, the smell of the medium for which so many people have worked and sacrificed. Karl Mayer is one who has sacrificed.

With dictators on the Continent, you meet many movie people these days in England and America. They fall quickly into two kinds. Those who have the up-to-the-minute lowdown, the latest trade-show in mind, the last party in head and stomach, the quick entry into the producer's office. And those who know the policy guiding movies, know where the worthwhile work is being done, know what really makes picture-making important beyond its provision of jobs. They used to talk about actors and producers who loved the theatre. There are few film people who love the film. Karl Mayer is one.

An exile from Germany, this little grey-haired exuberant writer is the mind which lay behind so many of the films that earned for the German cinema between 1919 and 1926 the label of golden. He has been in England three years but, beyond advising Czinner and Bergner in a friendly way, he has been given little to do.

Shy, quiet, slow to talk about himself, I set him talking about the German cinema in its great days. Names, dates and some old stills unloosened his memory. But he was careful to explain first. The past is dead. Old films cannot really live again. The film is the film of the moment. But the creative effort, the ideas that went into old films, that is something worth recording and discussing. We agreed that movie is a matter of development, that it is profitable to remember how those developments took place and were inspired. With these terms set, Mayer talked.

He recalled what Paul Wegener's pre-War version of *The Student of Prague* (1913) registered on his mind. But, with the crisis of the War intervening, he passed on to an evening in 1919 when he was walking through the Charlottenburg suburb of Berlin in a district little-known to him. He was writing for the theatre then. Up a side street he saw a fair. A barker drew his attention to an 'electrical' man whose actions could be controlled. The idea of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was born. With Hans Janowitz, another writer, Mayer shared a flat and to Janowitz that night he told his idea. Together they wrote a story. To Erich Pommer, producer at Decla Bioskop, it was proposed.

"You must remember," diverged Mayer, "that film production in Germany was largely a matter of big-scale historical pictures. Lubitsch was making *Anne Boleyn* and *Dubarry*, Buchowetski *Danton* and *Peter the Great*. Such films were really in the tradition of the Italian spectacle films like *Cabiria* and *Quo Vadis?* Jannings, Krauss, Veidt and Pola Negri were all playing pretentious historical rôles. *Caligari* was something completely new and it is to Pommer's credit that he backed it."

Pommer had no time to read the story after lunch but Mayer insisted on telling him the opening scenes. By teatime Pommer had bought the story. Wiene (now dead; see *W.F.N.* for August) was suggested by Pommer as director. The rest was collaborative effort, Mayer stipulates that. With the three painters, Warm, Reimann and Röhrig, a treatment was prepared. *Caligari* became celluloid and film history. Mayer regrets only that "the story within a story" was not told so simply as he had wished. The film not only started a cycle in Germany for films of the macabre with expressionist treatment but it startled the world.

Mayer tried one more story in this Hoffmanesque manner, again with Wiene directing but Cesar Kleine doing the décor. *Genuine* was never shown in England but is described by Bardèche and Brasillach as "a very sombre affair, though entertaining enough, with cubist settings which seldom sustain their interest. The characters seemed to blend into the settings as though camouflaged and then from time to time stand out against them boldly in an extraordinary fashion".* In the same year he wrote *The Hunchback and the Dancer* for F. W. Murnau, with Karl Freund photographing. In 1922 he scripted *Vanina* from Stendhal for the late Arthur von Gerlach and likes to describe it as a film ballad.

Already he was thinking of a film which told its story by pictures alone. In the previous year he had written a film without titles for Lupu Pick's company. *Scherben*, the story of a signalman at a lonely signalbox, was also Mayer's first attempt to build a film around a central figure, an idea which has always been of great interest to him. Werner Krauss played the main part and the film attracted wide notice. Mayer began to realise the camera's function of selecting details. His scripts were written with elaborate directions to the cameraman, just such a revolution in script writing as were Shaw's detailed stage directions in his plays in the '90's. "I wrote my script," says Mayer, "through the camera." Again without titles, *Hintertreppe* was a backstreet story which made great use of symbolic detail, ideas which later were to be taken up by Stroheim in *Greed* and Chaplin in *Woman of Paris*. It started a vogue for backstreet films and was followed by Karl Grune's *The Street* (which lacked Mayer's imagination) and later by the films of Pabst and Bruno Rahn.

ALWAYS progressing, Mayer then became interested in the screen presentation of time. With Lupu Pick he discussed many experiments which resulted in *Sylvester* (*New Year's Eve*) in which, again without titles, again with one main character, he told the story of exactly sixty minutes before midnight in exactly one hour's screen time. In the same way that the signalman's lantern was used as a *leitmotif* in *Scherben*, the clock in the town square dominated *Sylvester*. Mayer felt that the film must be seen through the clock, that the clock must "somehow be made to approach the camera". From that idea and from a primitive little trolley built specially by cameraman Guido Seeber at the Staaken studio, have come all the camera dollies and camera cranes that function in almost every film made to-day. Hollywood was to seize voraciously the idea of moving its cameras but not until it had seen Mayer's next film—the famous *Last Laugh*. The script as usual had detailed instructions that the camera was to truck and fly. Mayer visualised and wrote everything through the camera which Freund handled so well. Camera and central character were linked. Originally written for Lupu Pick, the hall-porter was eventually played by Emil Jannings. *The Last Laugh* was rated one of the ten pictures of the year in America. Hollywood sent for the script and studied it.

But Mayer was tiring at the restriction and artificiality of the studios. All these films had been wholly studio-made. Mayer lost interest in "fictional invention" and wanted his stories to "grow from reality". In 1925, standing amid the whirling traffic of the Ufa Palast am Zoo, he conceived the idea of a City Symphony. He saw "a melody of pictures" and began to write the treatment of *Berlin*. On a holiday with Lupu Pick while resting from *The Last Laugh*, he told Pick the idea. Pick contributed much practical advice—the hidden camera in the lorry. But the film went into production before Mayer was satisfied with the script. The film as Ruttmann made it was far from Mayer's conception. Its surface approach was what Mayer had tried to avoid. He and Ruttmann agreed to differ.

Still absorbed with reality, he then scripted the story of a river from source to delta and the people who lived by it. But *The Danube* was never made. Years later Lods made the story of *The Seine* and Lorentz *The Mississippi*.

The exodus from the German studios to Hollywood was in full swing. But Mayer stopped behind. From across the ocean, Fox commissioned him to write *Sunrise* from Suderman's *A Trip to Tilsit*. Mayer called it *The Song of Two People*. It was Murnau's most successful film in Hollywood.

In 1932, Mayer left Germany for good with Czinner and Bergner. With them in Paris he worked on *Ariane* and *Der Traumende Mund*. Going on in his mind all this time is the idea of the film creation of a central character for which *Sylvester*, *Scherben* and *The Last Laugh* were only note-books. He has spent months writing a story of the East End of London but, unlike his earlier films, the central character is a woman. Its background is reality. If produced, it should be another step in film technique, another achievement by the man who was one of the best brains behind what we now call the "classics" of the German cinema.

* '*The History of Motion Pictures.*' *Bardèche and Brasillach. Edited by Iris Barry* (*Norton, New York*, 1938).

It's home to us anyway

THE furniture of a daydream is always costly, and perhaps this sufficiently explains why in English films the peaceful countryside is covered with Elizabethan mansions whose interiors are decorated in a style that would be considered at once too garish and too expensive by any sensible proprietor of a night club. And even when the story expressly demands, as in a fairly recent film, "a poky little flat," it is obvious that the rent of this hovel must amount to at least five hundred pounds a year. But though there may be a simple and commercial reason for all this luxury the example of French films shows that it is not absolutely necessary.

It may be that the public do not like to be reminded of their own lives and surroundings. But at the same time this persistent splendour seems to have become an idiom, a convention of the cinema, like that which once prevented the mention of a dog, except by means of a periphrasis, in French tragedy or the appearance of any but titled persons in English comedy.

It is perhaps worth remarking that there is much the same contrast in French and English painting; English painting is apt to disguise the everyday world and French painting to reveal it. When the impressionists came to London they carefully studied the illimitable vistas and Italianate glories of Turner, but themselves settled down to take views of Penge and Dulwich, which happen to be among the few works of art that really show what the more commonplace parts of England are like . . .

But the French are a frugal nation and seem to dislike seeing money wasted as much as they dislike wasting it. With a public thus enlightened by parsimony the cinema in France has become a worthy successor to the impressionist movement in painting, and its detached, accurate vision of everyday people in their natural surroundings, quite apart from the intrinsic interest of such scenes, has greatly enlarged the scope of the films. It has enabled them to present situations and characters that could never exist in the marble halls of which our cinema so persistently dreams.

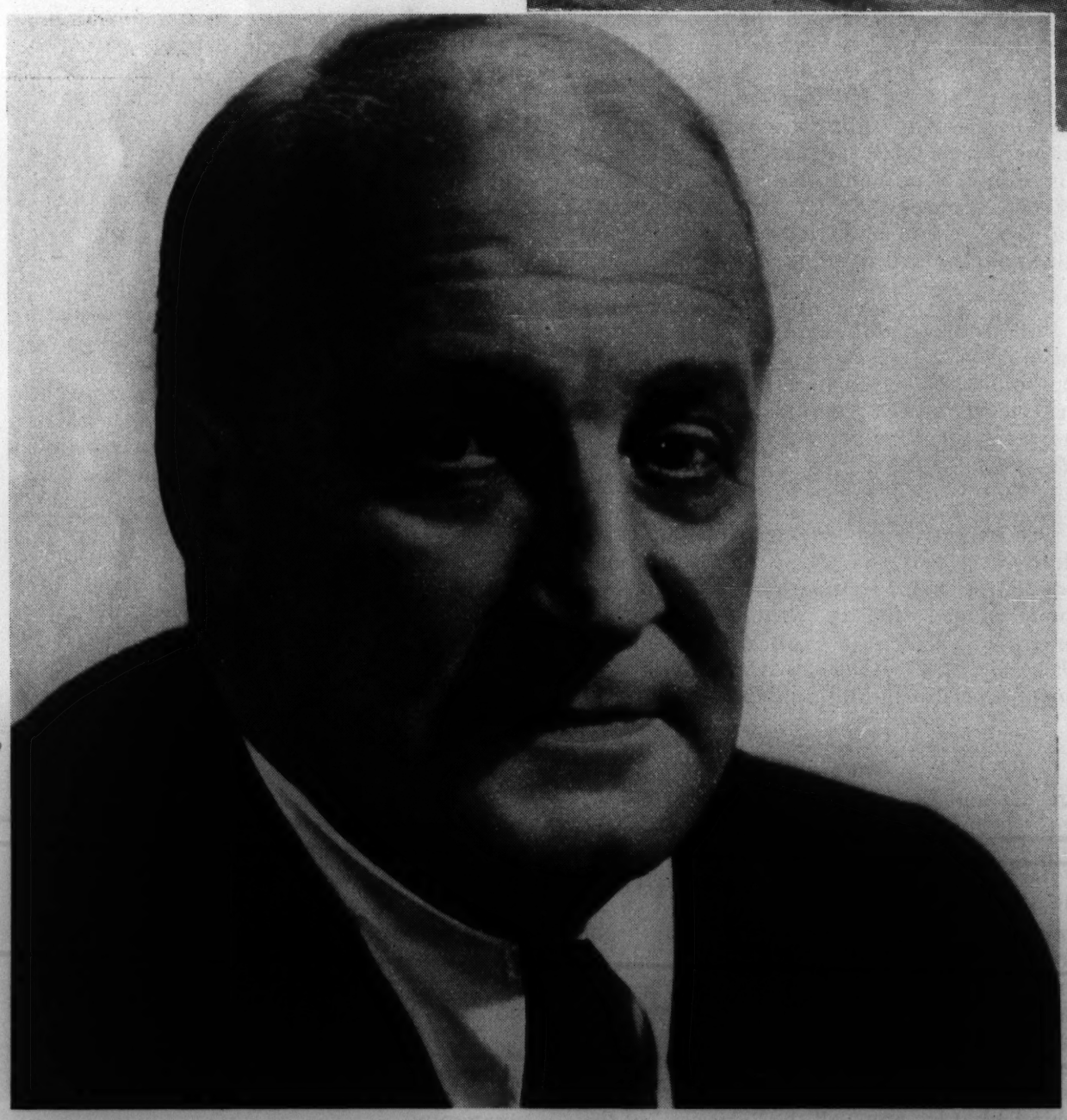
To take but one simple example, the plot of a recent French film turned on an exquisite and amusing contrast between a provincial ballroom as it appeared to the memory of a woman and as it was in actual fact. This would have been scarcely possible in the usual consistently expensive film, where scenes of low life are only grudgingly introduced with crude burlesque and for comic relief. But even if the average films cannot often attempt adventurous plots they could at once be enlivened by a little accurate observation, and this, as our documentary films have shown, is by no means a unique capacity of the French. If the course of true love could occasionally flow outside the mansion and the night club one could attend with much greater equanimity.

Extract from The Times

The Prissy Pants of Literature

John Grierson reviews Flaherty's 'The Captain's Chair'

A scene from 'Nanook of the North'



Robert Flaherty

To place Flaherty as a story teller, you should hear him roll them among his peers, in igloos, mining camps, Hudson's Bay posts, and what have you in Papeete. Failing that, the Coffee House Club in New York, the Canadian Club that was on Madison Avenue, or the Cafe Royal, London, Eng., will do. But by that time the greatest of the lively arts is taking a header into literature. *The Captain's Chair* is a full nose-dive into the pool, and when Flaherty takes a header into anything, the splash is liable to affright walruses and topple icebergs half way to the Pole.

No better visual description was ever written. The metaphor is brilliant. The central conception—of how one man's vanity broke the law of the sea and the spirit of a ship and brought disaster to the great Bay—is the sort of thing that makes classics. The form, like Melville's, is the form of a story teller who has seen men in most places and heard them speak: a vast plain of individual narratives. It is like seeing the farms of the West cohere themselves across horizons and call themselves Saskatchewan. The individual narratives build up like bricks till you have a monu-

ment to the bravery of mankind, which is rare in literature to-day.

Literature is to-day lousy with ideas, grumblings of the bowels, worries. It is smart and slick and nothing without its prissy pants of skilled execution; it is dull with meaning well, or it is exhibitionist with heavy, deliberate style. It is all so bloody priestley, or eliot, or huxley.

I confess for one, and without shame, that when I want my literature nowadays I read Dizzy Dean, the Chicago Cubs' pitcher, and how the Cincinnati Reds started to get touch "so I beared down"; or Gene Fowler describing the death of Tammen, that merry and noble old shyster of Denver; or William Hickey on the famous Rawlings lunch at the Dorchester; or Bill Considine on how Baer got religion and how the dream voices spoke to little Maxie on his moral responsibilities; or the local reporter—was it in Alberta?—who described the rain on the fields about him, after eight years' drought and the plagues of Egypt, and said he was seeing the stars of heaven; or the World-Telegram man who came back from the Louis-Schmeling fight, and caught the night's deadline with 5,000 words about the joy in Harlem that was pure Defoe.

It seems to me that these fellows write the pants off the members of our Academy. They have their eye on the ball. Against the brightness of their vision and the seen image, the Academes are professional and distant, shadow-of-a-shadow people, and the sort of people you kick out of sensible republics. I go with Gogarty and say education is a fearful thing when the graphiti on the lavatory walls go political, and it is the same with writing. "I have grown weary of the adventures of novelists, for they are inventions, and not of the highest heaven at that," says Gogarty. I would not mind if literature did not reflect a death of humanism which is probably the basic disaster of our day. Fascism, Bolshevism, Democracy: listen to the theories flapping like wet fish all over the place. It makes you weep when the good raw stuff of story telling is going to waste in the pubs and the villages, and most everywhere.

BUT here is Flaherty to say what I mean. I can't tell how much Flaherty knows about literature, except that he is liable now and again to slip his eagle eye over the British Museum and start ordering you to read Plutarch. One thing he does know, is that it should not taste like puffed wheat, and that is revolutionary enough in these days of dreary writing. I have to confess that I can read *The Captain's Chair* without dying of wind in the stomach. And what is it but just a lot of life and a lot of death straggling out into the coastal outline of the North—a Dane who puts all his money in a ship and drives it ashore by mistake, and elects to live in it thereafter, with the deck all cockeyed and the winds of hell blowing through the gaping timbers—the epic ten-year Odyssey of Comock the Eskimo, whose friend loses his wife in an ice split, goes mad, and has to be murdered, with Flaherty, the old Greek, putting the murder off-stage, and keeping his story on the eyes of the madman. Or it is Nucktie the Owl, the sissy Eskimo with the frizzled hair who had to see God to keep the tribal focus on him, and of course duly saw him, and how his fellow Eskimos got wise to the racket and began to see God too. And, keeping the narratives together, there is the story of the ship whose spirit broke: getting round the Bay and getting later and later, the rumours flying—God knows how—over a million square miles of advancing winter, the human disasters popping off like corks one after another all along the coasts of the Bay, and the sound of men screaming as loud as a war. I doubt if there are half a dozen writers in English who could match the scale of it.

But here to confess a fault. You have this gap between the story tellers who have the material and the prissy pants experts who haven't even a sense of smell. I would sooner have the good reporter miss the big shape than have the big shape without the reporter's eye, but, as in Zola and Melville, one needs both to have the miracle. I watch Flaherty as he makes the jump across that gap. He has, you might think, everything. The conception is big, the material is rich, the eye is in the school of Dante. But he jumps short and misses. The big material and the visual writing to beat the band hang loosely together. I got a picture of Minnesota going north out of it, as I saw it the other day. The lakes, the sloughs are separated in pools, and the Red River winds slowly through. But Minnesota going south is the Mississippi and its tributaries taking a world of water with them. Works of art like that are seldom enough, but they happen.

I SHALL remember two things about *The Captain's Chair* for long enough. One is the description of the iceberg that went crazy and came against the wind. "A berg howling and sobbing from every cave and pock and cavern as it came on dead against the gale, passed not a deck's width to one side." The other is the story of Nucktie the book did not quite tell.

I have a definite grudge about Nucktie, because I have heard Flaherty tell it in an atmosphere less rarefied than literature, and it told for an hour and a half brilliantly, and piled up into a Voltairean laugh about God and religion, which was anything but blasphemous. I will swear that Flaherty in telling it did not care a tinker's curse whether it was Voltaire or Disney, so long as the fun was good. But dressing by the right and being literature has burdened even that old prospector's broad shoulders. The ease of detail has gone, and not caring a tinker's curse whether it is Voltaire or Disney, and old Nucktie runs out as merely a good laugh on Buchman and the Oxford Movement, which, one must confess, is not first league Voltairean laughing at all. After all there was the Canadian parson who did it very effectively already. "You are holding something back from me, So-and-so," says Buchman, putting on the old pressure. "By God, I am," says So-and-so, "by God, I am."

I feel like saying that, great and exciting as Flaherty's book is, I would sooner have my story-telling on the yon side of the Cafe Royal's red plush; that we might as well stick to reporting and films and story-telling for our pleasure, and the hell with the books; that for a personal preference, I would sooner have my Flaherty straight than watered by any inhibiting processes of literature whatsoever. But with now so many more like Flaherty barging their way into writing, it may be that a brave thing is happening. Perhaps a school of the picaresque, in which men write as they talk, is coming up. It would be the greatest blessing of our day, for we have been listening to women and dead men for long enough.

* * *

'The Captain's Chair' is published by Hodder & Stoughton, and is priced 7/6.

Black Extras

MANY of these extras were born among the swamps that engulf the African hinterland. Many were born beneath the tram wires that enmesh the East End.

But once removed by way of the stoke-hold, twice removed through the dockside slum, three times removed under the cabaret lights, it makes no difference. The jungle casts its shadow across their footprints.

A guinea a day sets them running between the *Old Bones* set and *The Four Feathers* set at Denham, and it's half a guinea extra if you take a piccaninny to play in the sand. That's big money. More than you can earn in a month selling monkey skins to the traders.

One from the night-clubs is in a fashionable suit grinning at the other gabbling a native tongue. One takes his tea elegantly on a chair. The other squats on the grass, holding his cup in both hands. One must be made blacker by the make-up man. The other is black enough.

Stripped of the latest style and the seaman's reach-me-down one handles the spear and shield with embarrassment, the other naturally, surely.

But when the drum beats louder, louder, and naked feet stamp up the dust faster, faster, it's blood and not birthright that surges forth to sway the scene.

Light negro, dark negro, city negro, kraal negro—they dance as one.

They have forgotten the arc lamps, the cameras, the next train back to town. The shallow present recedes with tumult into the black past.

Mackenzie Porter—*The Evening Standard.*

The Hurricane (*United Artists*)

GIVE US LAMOUR

Alexander Shaw, who made 'Five Faces of Malaya', chides Paramount for their new film 'Booloo.'

Sex, not Sakai, is Hollywood's meat, he urges, and cries for more jungle princesses and Tarzans.

HOLLYWOOD has added yet another page to its peculiar ethnographical encyclopædia. The inscrutable Chinese, the passionate Arab, the mad Hungarian, the philandering French and all the other dear familiar races are now joined by the Savage Sakai. He is a new arrrival but he should do well as he's got a lot of things the others haven't got—poison darts, for instance, and a blow gun.

Booloo, Paramount's new all-horror-and-no-honesty jungle epic takes us to Malaya, the country of these Sakai. The only Malaya anybody knows about is inhabited by Mr. Somerset Maugham's bridge-playing gang so, once in the jungle, Paramount has a clear field to go ahead and entertain us. This is the story they tell. The Imperial Exploration Society of London has removed the bronze plaque of a famous explorer from its walls. His son, Capt. Rogers, sets out to avenge his father's honour by proving that the paternal stories of Sakais sacrificing beautiful maidens to a white tiger are true. But first he must put on his uniform to say good-bye to his loved one, for she is a British colonel's daughter, even if she has an American accent. Time and space are not to sever them completely, though, for into the jungle he will take a short-wave radio set to link him daily with civilisation and the beloved.

Booloo (*Paramount*)

(*Paramount*)

Arrived in Malaya (good authentic shots on Singapore railway station), he leaves the military outpost at Kuala Kangsar and sets out into the heart of the jungle.

Passing every variety of animal on his way he arrives in Sakai country where, into the middle of a short-wave conversation with his fiancée, cuts the voice of tragedy. One of his guides sees the white tiger, the Sakais disconnect the generator and the fiancée is left at the end of a dead line with doom ringing in her ears. Aldershot and the jungle are cut off.

Alone in the jungle, his guide dead at his feet with three poisoned darts in his chest, Rogers decides to carry on. Eventually he sees a maiden offered as a sacrifice, he rescues her, kills the white tiger and is himself captured and tortured. In the nick of time a body of British troops arrive (Come on, you fellows!) and Rogers is saved.

His father's plaque is reinstated and the Exploration Society are left with the problem presented by the presence of the beautiful sacrifice, sarong-clad, in their London board-room.

That's fine. Dozens of good films have been made out of worse stories than that. But this time the Hollywood boys haven't even tried. They have just sat back and left it to the animals of which there are so many that it is a wonder how they all manage to get into one jungle.

It's like a Zoo. No suspense, no excitement — tiger — panther — sledang — one — two — three. All looking magnificent—they always do—and cross cut with the inevitable mother monkeys and their so-cute babies.

The actors, apparently giving up all hope of competing with the animals, hurry through their various parts in a flat, wooden manner. The dialogue is terrible and gives them no help whatsoever; one has a strong feeling that it was only written to fill in the gaps between the roar of the tiger and the snarl of the leopard.

Booloo could be dismissed as a stupid but harmless joke but there is a more serious side to the matter.

THERE *is* a group of people in the Malayan jungle known as Sakai, there *is* a place called Kuala Kangsar, and Paramount sent a unit to Malaya to shoot authentic material. In fact, they ask you to believe that the whole background is real and true.

A pictorial supplement to the Straits Budget, December 2nd, 1937, shows location stills under the heading 'Jungle thrills in Singapore' and says: "About a quarter of an hour from the heart of Singapore, Clyde Elliot's Paramount *Booloo* unit was recently on location making jungle scenes that will thrill audiences all over the world."

Strange that Paramount should have gone to the expense of sending a unit to film material in Singapore which they could have shot themselves on their own Hollywood lot and done a sight better.

And there is another mystery. Somebody went into the jungle with a camera because there are five shots of real Sakai in the film as well as one or two authentic jungle scenes. Why was so little of the real material used?

Why didn't Paramount do the thing properly? Either they should have made it a slap-up adventure film with a couple of stars, some idols, plenty of half-clad beauties and lots of crocodiles, or they should have made an honest film on the lines of *Chang* or *White Shadows*. Why send a unit into the jungle and then use a few minutes of the resulting material? Why visit one of the most interesting and little-known races in the world and then film a gang of natives picked up in Singapore crashing about the jungle like a troop of demented girl guides and call them Sakai?

In Malaya fact is more interesting than any fiction. The cry of the gibbons at dawn in the jungle, the distant sound that might be a tiger and the fresh tracks of wild elephants across the often-used footpath; these are more exciting than any Zoo close-up. Medicine men in each tribe have their tiger familiars whom they use to help the tribe in its struggle against the forces of Nature. During their dances the medicine man will go into a state of dissociation and be possessed by the tiger. Surely here there is material for the movie camera.

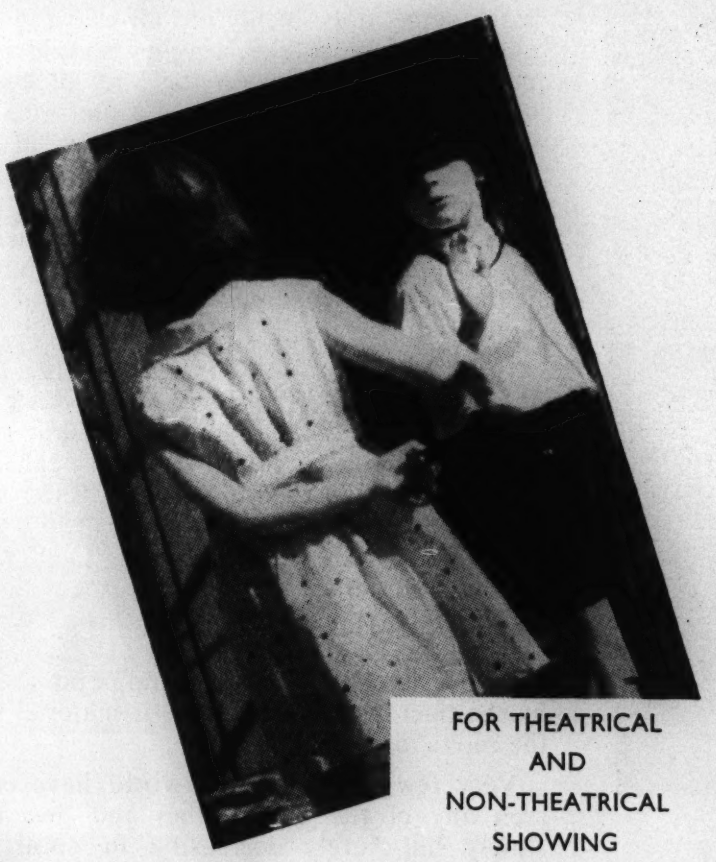
Very few people in the world have ever seen any of the Sakai tribes and they are slowly but surely decreasing in numbers. What a film could have been made on the subject of a dying race, harried by commercial interests and driven from their hunting grounds by Game Laws and Forestry Preservation Acts. With their blow-pipes and fire-making, their strange dances and animistic beliefs, they are a fit subject for a Flaherty. Superb jungle settings, a good-looking native race, strange customs—what more could Hollywood have wanted? Why did they leave it all and set up their cameras on Reformatory Road, Singapore?

As for the 'terrible Sakai'—during the time I spent making *Five Faces*, a film of Malaya which is now showing throughout Britain, I found these people to be charming, intelligent and helpful. Poison darts they certainly use—to kill rats and monkeys for food; and they can probably be as ferocious in the face of attack as any other race, whether civilized or not.

As for *Booloo*, let us give credit to the man who had to paint the tiger white and to the cameraman who knew his job and did it well.

Hollywood! Stick to fiction and don't pretend that it is fact. Give us adventure and tropic love. We like it. But next time you make a jungle picture, in the sacred name of entertainment, give us Lamour as well.

FOUR FILMS



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The SCREEN CHINAMAN CHANGES

The Achievement of Charlie Chan.

By Richard Carr

WHEN Pearl White died last month the newspaper placards read "Pearl White Dead". But when, a few days later, Warner Oland died, the newspapers announced "Charlie Chan Dead". That is a very great difference indeed, if you think about it. Even Paul Muni wouldn't get a placard like that—it wouldn't be "Scarface Dead" or "Hi Nellie Dead", it would just be "Paul Muni Dead". Nor when Henry Irving died did the newspapers report "Mathias Dead" or "Hamlet Dead", at least I've never heard of such a thing.

Pearl White remained Pearl White, not Elaine, for example, of *The Exploits of Elaine*. She was the central figure in a series of exciting happenings, and the excitement was sufficiently great and sustained to overshadow the beautiful heroine that was Pearl White. To most of us nowadays her name conjures up the great, exciting, formative days of movies ; thrills, escapes, chase, capture—the eternal, unchanging ingredients of all popular fiction and movies. Warner Oland appeared in some of the Pearl White serials, but nobody remembers him. In fact, few people care about Warner Oland, but a lot care about Charlie Chan.

Charlie Chan we all got to know very well. We knew him, we knew his wife and we knew his family. His wife hovered in the background of the films, quiet and uninterfering, with none of your Myrna Loy chatter to take the detective, and our minds, off the case. Charlie Chan had hordes of children—I never got to counting them, largely because their existence was never allowed to take attention from the film-story or impede its development—and his eldest son, an American Chinee, educated, formal, dignified, occasionally helped his father in a case. We got to like and wait for the Oriental wisecracks of the sleuth, which we fancied were the fathomless, inscrutable wisdom of the East, condensed for film purposes.

Charlie Chan inspired confidence. When he took a case and refused to believe that the police had arrested the right person, we knew that the suspected man or woman was innocent and that the real culprit would be brought to book. He always had a trick up his sleeve, and went one better than the crooks. When we saw Charlie Chan drop to the floor, shot or stabbed, our anxiety was only momentary: we knew he was fooling them again, playing dead or it was not Charlie at all but a specially made dummy. By such means the crooks would be put off the guard and Chan would soon be catching them out.

If this sounds like laughing at Charlie Chan it isn't meant to. Many screen actors achieve stardom and gain a huge fan following. Few inspire the affection and worship that was given to Charlie Chan, with so few assets to work with. He wasn't handsome, nor an athlete. He did no jaw-socking, no acrobatics: a fat Chinaman is not the boy's idea of a hero by a long shot. Yet he was adored by millions of American and British boys, and had a large adult following too, among those whose hearts are always young and who, for all the sophistication and smart alecing of the last few years, like their films to end right.

Fiction has always had its detectives who have secured a reading public running into millions. They have never made good on the screen. Sherlock Holmes has made fitful screen appearances but failed to create a demand for more. Sexton Blake, whose following must be greater and more long-lived than anybody since Robin Hood, also does poorly in pictures. Even the modern, city-slicker, Perry Mason, who was given a long screen run, established nothing in the way of a regular public. Try to think of any screen detective who has equalled the public of these fiction-heroes—and the answer is that none have—except Charlie Chan.

What a metamorphosis was this! Metamorphosis is the word; change or transformation fail to convey the colossal thing that happened when Charlie Chan climbed out of a 'B' picture into world fame. Charlie Chan—for the benefit of those film society members who never go to the movies—was a Chinaman. A Chinaman could not be a hero, especially to the young. In popular fiction and in the great screen tradition of silent days it was axiomatic that the worst thing you could run up against in this world was a Chinaman. Certain races were long ago marked out by the English as fighting in the wrong way and on the wrong side. Mexicans—though their closeness to the cowboy gave them a chance which they presently took and made good—were not to be trusted; a Red Indian would scalp your poor old crippled grandmother without batting an eye; a Frenchman was either screwy or after your wife and daughter; Italians were the same, though they also went in for rape and were masters at back-stabbing.

But worse than all these, worse even than meeting a cross-eyed man under a ladder, was a Chinaman, who was suave, treacherous, remorseless, kindless, handy with knife and wood-chopper. Chinamen were so bad that they were definitely unpopular, never getting anything like the tolerance and popularity of the gangster gunman. The Chinaman was without any human feelings whatever and he had a build up to death that was not only a defiance of all the canons of international law and outside the pale; it was beyond the reaches of the imagination of any human being, except script writers who, perhaps, don't come in that category.

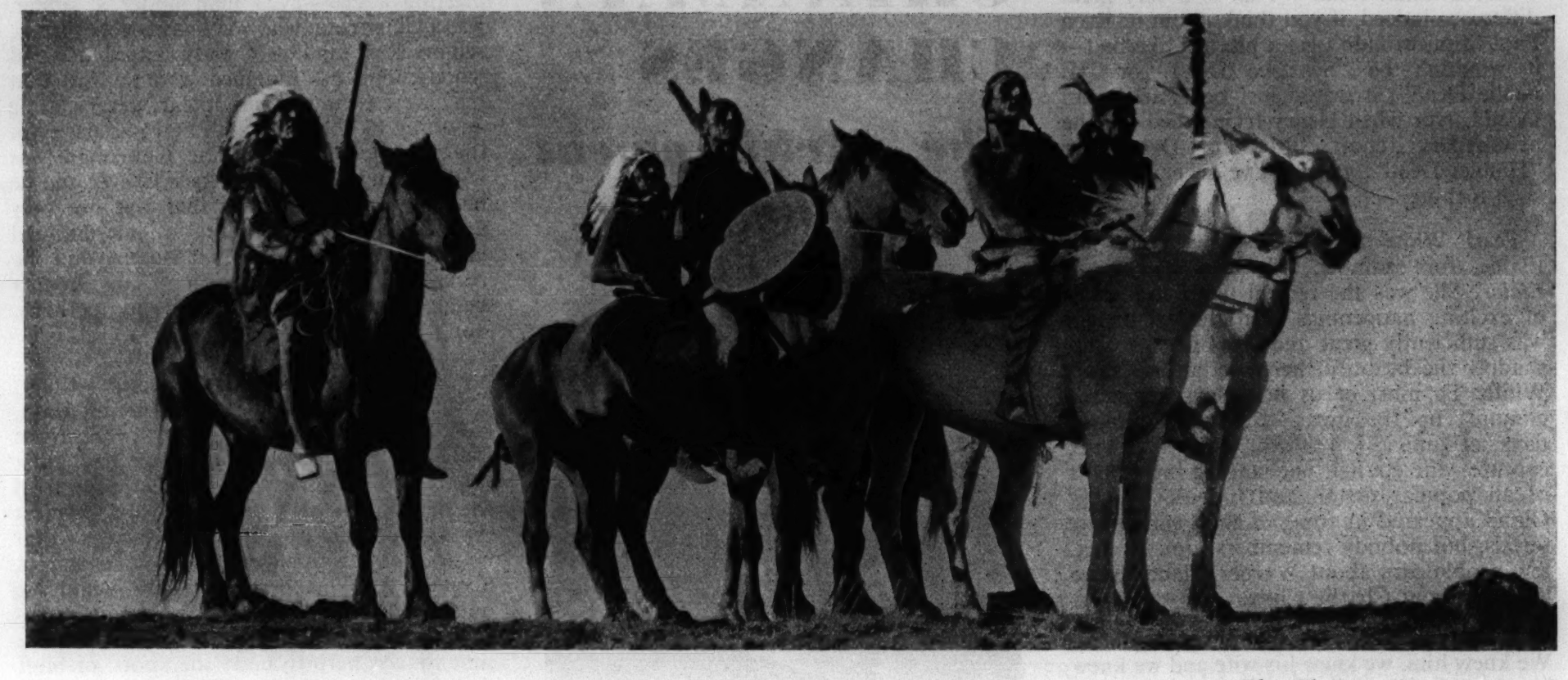
Chinamen were popular with script writers: of that I am certain. The slow lingering death, with suitable music and settings, meted out to heroes by the heathen Chinee had great filmic advantages. If the gangster gave it to the hero in the back or in the belly the most the script writer could do was fix it so that he was only wounded and came round in hospital with his best girl—with whom he quarrelled throughout the film—sitting moist-eyed on the bed. But the Chinese method gave time for the hero to undo the knots, or bluff and stall, or for a nick-of-time rescue. In fact it was a poor way of killing an enemy for in all my twenty years of screen going I never remember any of the fiendish deaths prepared for screen heroes coming off.

YET all this has gone, from the screen at least, and gone with a completeness that calls for explanation. It is said that the Hays office was responsible: it wanted to placate foreign audiences who, unreasonably I think, resented being shown all the time as stools, crooks and heels. But I don't believe that the Hays office could have done it without ruining the film industry. No censors could. It was Charlie Chan who did it so far as the Chinese were concerned. He made the Chinaman public hero number one. He did more than that. He gave us the first screen detective with the following and popularity of the heroes of fiction, and he gave us a screen characterisation that inspired affection. And that *is* something.

The strength of his achievement was shown when Charlie Chan gave place to Fu Manchu or some such devilish Chinee. Warner Oland made fitful returns to the kind of parts he played in the Pearl White days. But they created no demand for more. No one believed in that kind of Chinaman any more. The silky voice, full of menace, the slant eyes, the pad-pad of the slippers—how could all this be true when we'd seen Charlie Chan?

And I wouldn't mind betting that Charlie is in heaven right now clearing up all the unsolved crimes of history. And a lot of guys who got past Peter at the gate by not telling all, are now busy slugging, poisoning, doping Charlie's mint-julep, and sending him warning notes to lay off, whereas they might just as well start packing their things and move down to the other place right away.

THE LONE PRAIRIE



('*The Plainsman*'—*Paramount.*)

(AFTER ANNOUNCER AND CHORUS OF STAR-SPANGLED BANNER
FADE CHORUS . . .
FADE UP GALLOPING HORSE
FADE AWAY INTO . . .)

ONE hundred years ago, through the part of Texas that rims the Gulf of Mexico, across a diamond-shaped stretch of country roughly the size of England, a hundred thousand cattle roamed a plain of grass.

Most of them were not sold or herded or watched or shipped anywhere. They were like coyotes and rattlesnakes—they just came with the country.

For thirty years they roamed and multiplied.

They became a pest. They were as wild and tough as the buffalo. You couldn't handle them, like an Eastern farmer, with a stick and a friendly voice. But you could handle them if you were at home on horseback and could use a six-shooter. The Carolinas, fifty years before, really cradled American ranching but the Texas industry matured, developed it and set the characteristic pattern.

So last century gave birth near the Gulf of Mexico to something as logical and necessary as a steamship or a city bank.

I mean . . . the cowboy, the true knight of the nineteenth century.

(PLAY GROFE-GRAND CANYON SUITE, Sunrise—as BACKGROUND)

After the Civil War there were five million cattle in that corner of Texas.

You could buy a cow in Texas for four dollars. A man a thousand miles away, in Wyoming or Iowa, would pay you fifty dollars if you could get it to him. Naturally, a lot of people, in Prescott Webb's words, "took vigorous measures to connect the four-dollar cow with a fifty-dollar market."

The measures they took were no less and no more than the whole skill and industry of ranching. And the symbol and backbone of the cattle kingdom was . . . the cowboy.

Here is a sketch of his life and work, and the songs that come from nothing but that work and the monotony it leaves him to reflect on when he is sad or gay or in trouble.

Like some biblical prophet, these early men of Texas looked at the horizon of grass and owned what they saw . . . a range.

They found a stream and said, This is Mine.

If you had a stream and a vacant range, you were ready for the ranching business. You started to get yourself an Outfit, that is—

The whole crew of cattle, horses, wagons, and cowboys who start their work outdoors on April 15th and end it the first of December . . .

(FADE OUT GRAND CANYON SUITE)

First comes the Chuck Wagon, which carries food and bedding and tents. At the back of it over an open fire, any morning before the sun breaks through, stands the cook, frying bacon, brewing strong coffee. The red sun sifts in, and the cook goes around the tent and calls the men . . .

(PLAY GITTIN' UP HOLLER)

Wake up, Jacob, day's a breakin',
Fryin' pan's on an' the hoe cake's bakin',
Bacon on the pan and coffee in the pot,
Git up now and git it while it's hot.

It's a tempting sound all right, but it happens to be sung at four-thirty in the morning and many a cowboy feels this way about his work:

(PLAY ROLL OUT COWBOYS)

The greener lad he thinks it's play,
He'll peter out on a rainy day,
With his big-bell spurs and his Spanish hoss,
He'll swear that he used to be the Boss.
Then at half-past four
The noisy cook will roar—
Hoop-a-hoop-a-hey, roll out Cowboys.
Slowly you arise with sleepy feelin' eyes.
The sweet dreamy night has passed away.

The cowboy's life is a dreary life,
He's driving through the heat and the cold,
While the rich man's a-sleepin' on his velvet couch
A-dreamin' of his silver and gold.
Then at half-past four
The noisy cook, etc.

If it's the spring, the cattle must be rounded-up for their long trail north. The cowboys may have to round up over an area of anything from ten square miles to four thousand. It may take a day and it most likely takes a week. It's hard and dangerous work. When the calves are got together, the branding starts, to keep the herds distinct. While the branding is going on, a few cowboys will ride vigorously round the mooing, milling cattle making such a song as this:

The cowboy, knight of the nineteenth century, has been glorified out of recognition by fiction and films. His harsh voice has been softened, his prairie songs sweetened by Tin Can Alley.

Here is the script of 'The Lone Prairie', broadcast by Alistair Cooke in his brilliant series 'I Hear America Singing'. Here is the story of the cowboy, his day's work, and some of the songs once sung on the prairie and in the bunk-house.

(PLAY RIDIN' ROUND CATTLE)

Whoopin' up cattle,
I'm sendin' up cattle,
I'm ridin' roun' cattle
With a whoop-ti-diddle-dum-yay-um-yay
And a whoop-ti-diddle-dum-yay.

When the herds had been separated and branded with the simple sign of the man who owned them—a circle, a cross, a hammer—then plans were made to start the long trek north . . . twelve or fifteen hundred miles across treeless plains with the possible enemies of tornado, windstorm, famine, the certain enemies last century of—buffalo and Indians.

The Outfit is ready. Ahead the Chuck Wagon.

Then the Hoodlum Wagon carrying the water barrels, wood and branding irons.

Then the Remuda—the cow ponies trailing behind the wagon.

Then the "line"—the winding tape of cattle, with cowboys riding at a slow amble at intervals, keeping the line clean and moving, watching, like this cowboy, for some nervous dogie—the yearling steers, or you might call them orphan calves. *It's your misfortune and none of my own*, he sings—

Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along little dogies!
It's your misfortune and none of my own;
Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along little dogies,
For you know Wyoming will be your new home!

Early in the spring we round up the dogies,
Mark and brand and bob off their tails,
Round up our horses, load up the chuck wagon,
Then throw the dogies up on the trail:
Whoopee, ti yi yo, git along, etc.

As the days burn their way along, the cowboy has lots of time to think of odd things that happened at the round-up, about for instance a young city man who tried to ride a bronco, called *Zebra Dun* . . .

(PLAY ZEBRA DUN)

When the stranger hit the saddle old Dunny quit the earth
And travel'd right straight up for all that he was worth.
A-pitchin' an' a squealin' an' a-having wall-eyed fits
His hind feet perpendicular, his front ones in the bits.

We could see the tops of mountains under Dunny's every jump
But the stranger he was growed there just like a camel's hump.
The stranger sat upon him and curled his black moustache
Just like a summer boarder a-waitin' for his hash.
There's one thing and a sure thing I've learned since I've been born,
Every educated feller ain't a plumb greenhorn.

And when they next pitch camp or stop to eat, a fiddle and a guitar will waken memories of The Trail to Mexico, the cowboy classic of a love that was not returned . . .

It was in the year of eighty-three
That A. J. Stinson hired me;
He says, "Young man, I want you to go
And follow this herd into Mexico."

Well, it was early in the year
When I started out to drive those steers;
Through sleet and snow 'twas a lonesome go
As the herd rolled on into Mexico.

When I arrived in Mexico
I wanted to see my girl but I could not go;
So I wrote a letter to my dear
But not a word for years did I hear.

Well, I started back to my once loved home,
Inquired for the girl I had called my own;
They said she had married a richer life,
Therefore, wild cowboy, seek another wife.

At the end of one trail, another trail is starting. A cowboy in Cheyenne, Wyoming, sings a farewell to the town as he rides his horse, Old Paint, up to Montana . . .

My foot is in the stirrup, my pony won't stan'
I'm a leavin' Cheyenne, I'm off for Montan'.
Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm a-leaving Cheyenne.

Old Paint's a good pony, he paces when he can,
Good morning, young lady, my hosses won't stan'.
Oh, hitch up your hosses and feed 'em some hay,
My wagon is loaded and rolling away.

I'm a-riding Old Paint, I am a leading old Dan,
I'm goin' to Montan' for to throw the hoolihan.
Goodbye, Old Paint, I'm a-leavin Cheyenne.

THE night comes on and the wagons are at a standstill. The tents are pitched and the dinner's over. They sit around the fire behind the Chuck Wagon and think of the luxuries they can have when the herd is delivered. Such as this song about Rye Whisky, all the more tearful when you realise not many ranchers allow their men liquor away from the ranch . . .

It's a beef-steak when I'm hungry,
Rye whisky when I'm dry,
A greenback when I'm hard up,
And heaven when I die.
Oh, whisky, rye whisky, whisky, I cry.
If a tree don't fall over me,
I'll live till I die.

Her parents, don't like me,
They say I'm too poor.
Say I'm unfit
To wed their daughter.
Her parents don't like me,
My money's my own.
And them that don't like me
Can leave me alone.
Oh, whisky, rye whisky, etc.

Cowboys had to make their own pleasure. And a tune to them was a precious stone to re-cut and turn over in your hand. Here's one slightly changed by this cowboy, set to words that lead you on to a rhyme that never comes.

It's a nonsense song containing possibly the worst similes in the language. And it's called, the Horse Named Bill . . .

Oh, I had a horse and his name was Bill,
And when he ran he couldn't stand still.
And also—
I ran with him.

He ran so fast he could not stop,
He ran into a barber shop,
And fell exhaustionised—with his eyeteeth-
In the barber's left shoulder.

[continued on page 215]

A STRAND FILM

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DONALD TAYLOR

★

Producers of Quality Shorts

★

Distributed by Technique Distributors

★

At the Venice Exhibition

Strand Films : FIVE FACES, WATCH AND WARD IN THE AIR, MONKEY INTO MAN

T.I.D.A. Films (Produced by Strand): THE BRITISH NAVY, OF ALL THE GAY PLACES

At the Malvern Festival

At the Malvern Picture House Pageant of British Films, all the shorts were Strand Films
ZOO BABIES, MITES AND MONSTERS, ZOO AND YOU, WATCH AND WARD IN THE AIR, LONDON WAKES UP

At the British Association

Special show of MONKEY INTO MAN, MITES AND MONSTERS

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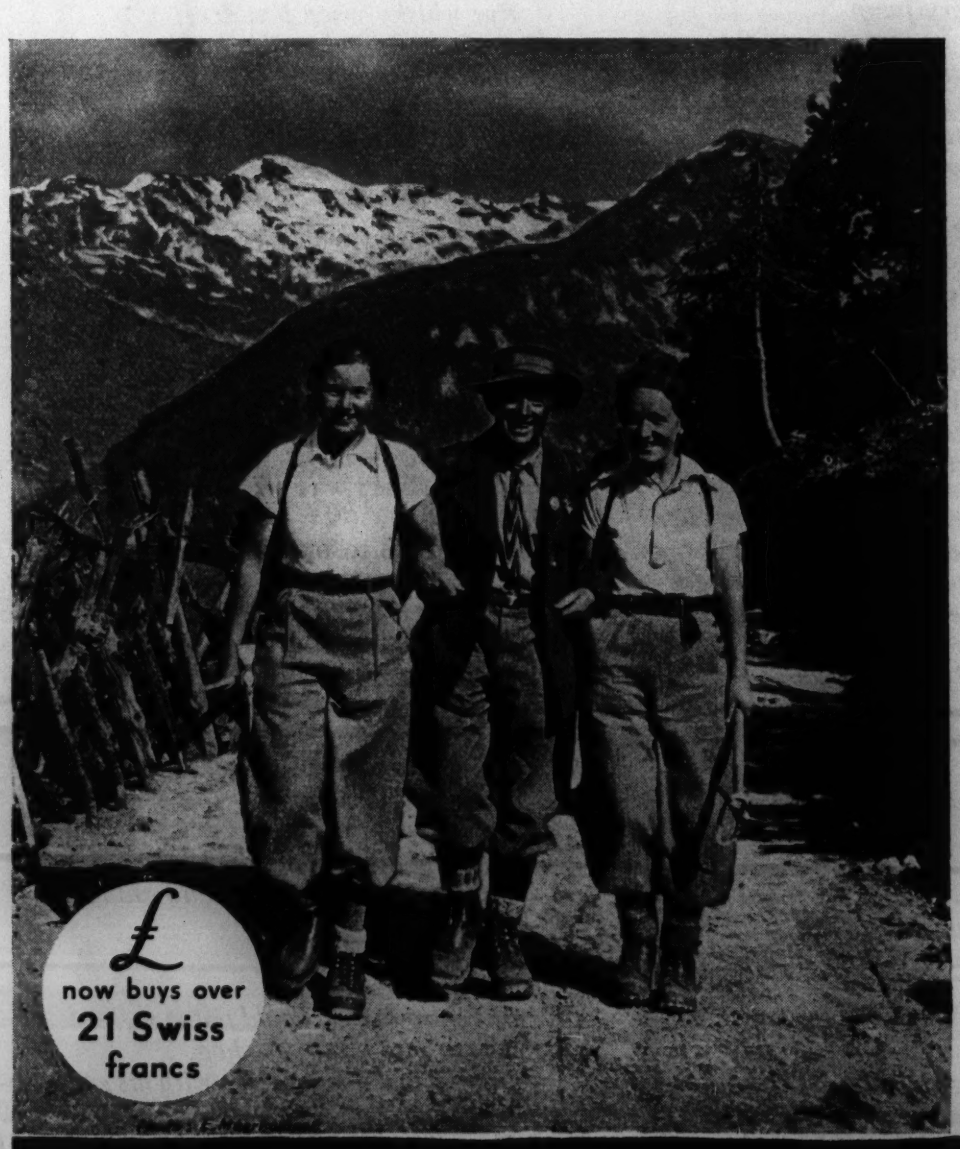
Music from CONQUEST OF THE AIR (*Produced by Strand for London Films*)
Music from ANIMAL LEGENDS (*Strand Film Zoological Productions*)



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Continuing 'The Lone Prairie'

I had a gal and her name was Daisy,
And when she sang the cat went crazy
With diliriums—St. Vituses—
And all kinds—
Of cataleptics.

I'm going out in the woods next year
And shoot for beer—and not for deer—
I am—I ain't—
I'm a great
Sharshootress.

At shooting birds I am a beaut.
There is no bird I cannot shoot
In the eye, in the ear, in the teeth,
In the fin(g)ers.

Oh, I went up in a balloon so big,
The people on the earth they looked like a pig,
Like a mice—like a katydid—like flieses—
And like fleasens.

The balloon turned up with its bottom side higher,
It fell on the wife of a country squire,
She made a noise like a dog hound, like a steam whistle,
And also—
Like dynamite.

Oh, what could you do in a case like that?
Oh, what could you do but stamp on your hat,
And your toothbrush—and everything—
That's helpless.

As the light suddenly fails and the fire dies, the oldest singer of the outfit will be called on to sing a song that is practically the cowboy's night time prayer. He may like his work, he may never begrudge the perils of a round-up, the weariness of twenty hours in a hard saddle; but when he dies, like this cowboy, he'd rather be buried anywhere than on the lone prairie . . .

"Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie,
Where the wild kiyotes will howl o'er me;
Where the rattlesnakes hiss and the wind howls free,
Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie."

"Oh, bury me not on the lone prairie,"
These words came slowly and mournfully,
From the pallid lips of a youth who lay
On his cold damp bed at the close of day.

They heeded not his dying prayer,
They buried him there on the lone prairie,
In a little box just six by three,
His bones now rot on the lone prairie.

And the cowboys now as they roam the plain
(For they have marked the spot where his bones have lain)
Fling a handful of roses over his grave,
With a prayer to him who his soul will save.

Cowboy and Horse holding a lassoed cow (*Keystone*)

The score or more men go off to their tents. The cook has been abed an hour or two. For a small herd, a single cowboy goes on duty to watch and keep them quiet through the night. If one cow gets nervous, two will get frightened. And two frightened cattle, starting at a coyote's cry, might start a stampede. And a stampede means each cow of several hundred will lose from four to seven pounds in weight. Since cattle are fattened for profit, it would mean when selling time came, a loss of several thousand dollars to the rancher.

So the herding songs are pleasant lullabies, but they are also a form of social insurance . . .

Oh, go slow, dogies,
Quit rovin' around,
You have wandered and tramped all over the ground;
Oh, graze along, dogies, and feel kind of slow,
And don't for ever be on the go.
Hi-hoo, hi-hoo-oo-oo-oo.

Oh, say, little dogies,
When you're gonna lay down?
And quit this for ever a-siftin' around?
My legs are weary
And my seat is sore,
Oh, lay down, dogies, like you've laid down before,
Lay down, little dogies, lay down.
Hi-hoo, hi-hoo-oo-oo-oo.

THIS was the cowboy. Who beat out trails over tall grass and snow for two thousand miles. Trails south to Mexico. Trails north to Sedalia and Abilene and Chayenne.

He tended meat for the north, at first tough meat from longhorns, then as the kingdom prospered delicate rich meat from Herefords and Durhams.

For twenty years after the Civil War, the business grew.

Till the whole world rushed to be in on a good thing.

There came "generations from the four corners of the earth gathered by boom magic."

Men who had never seen the range played a rising market.

By 1880, those thousands of square miles were overstocked and over-sold. Thirty years before, a cow could wander a day for its food. In the end there were less than four acres for every cow to browse on. A single drought and for ten thousand cattle rounded up on one range, fifteen thousand lay dead and shaggy.

The waves of swaying grass the Texans saw were bitten down to desert. 1885 came the crash and the crumbling of the glory that was the cowboy.

One by one the symbols of the range have vanished . . . the buffalo, the prairie-dog, the longhorn. Barbed-wire traced out a pattern of decay, strung off ranges into farms.

(PLAY GRAND CANYON SUITE —PAINTED DESERT marked band for BACKGROUND . . .)

The Cowboy is the last to linger. With his bony frame, his self-sufficiency, his gentleness, his knotted scarf, "his loose arms slightly raised and swinging", as he rides away from our time into the records of the American Dream . . .

(FADE UP PAINTED DESERT . . .
FADE AWAY . . .

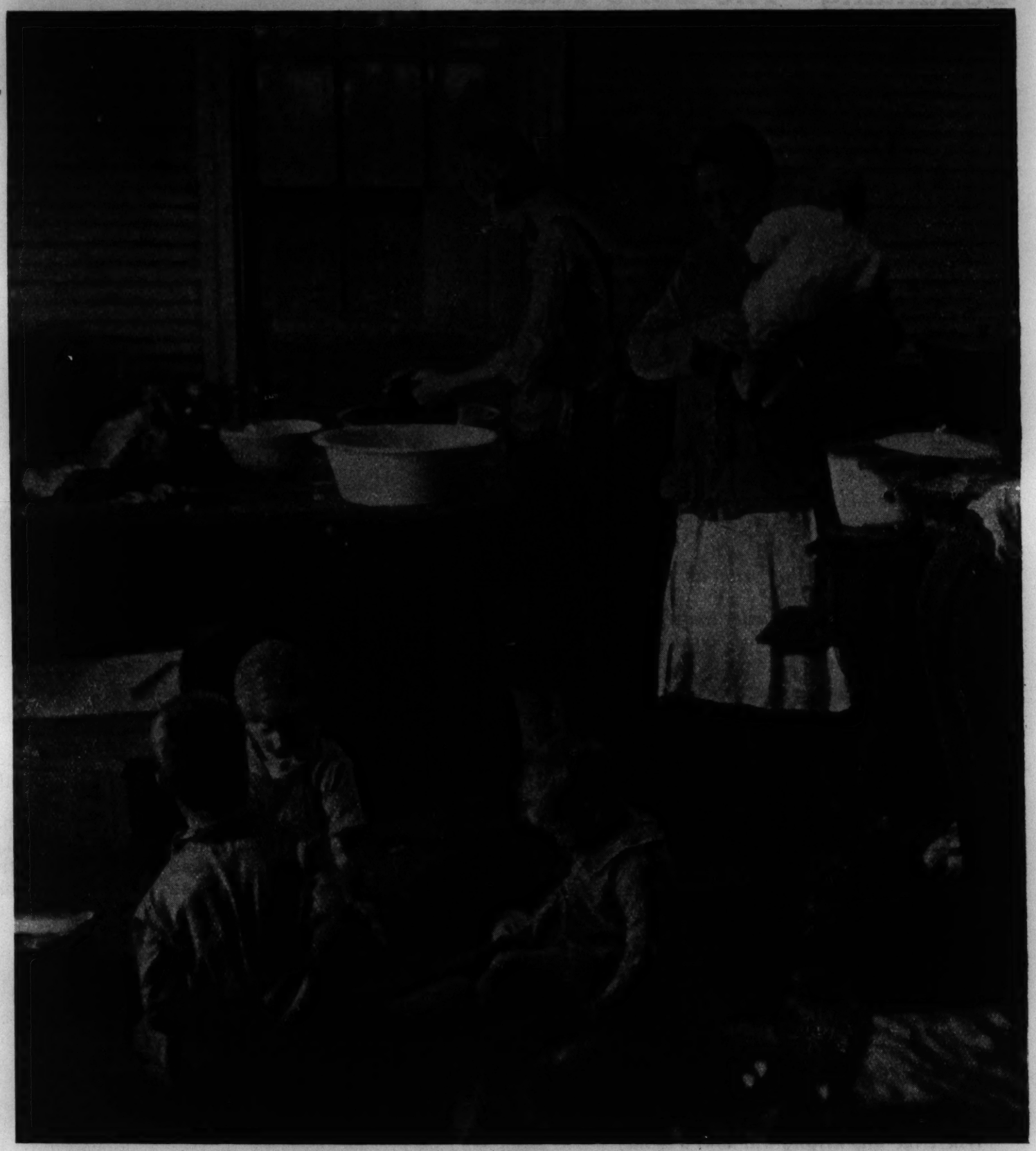
FADE UP RIDIN' ROUND CATTLE
LIFT PAINTED DESERT for harmonic background

FADE AWAY RIDIN' ROUND CATTLE
FADE UP PAINTED DESERT.)

•Job to be Done•

Under the shade of the best tree in Kansas four men tell of their search for work . . . from Pare Lorentz's radio play

(*With acknowledgments to the B.B.C. and to the Columbia Broadcasting Corporation of America*).



[*The March of Time.*]

WE watched the pictures of *The Plow that Broke the Plains*. We listened to the sound track of *The River*. Lorentz's new work—a Symphony of Reality—a Factual Drama of the American Industrial Scene, based on official reports and hundreds of case-histories collected by government investigators (*cf. The Living Newspaper*)—is wholly sound track. *Job to be Done* is the basis script of Pare Lorentz's next film, written for the radio, produced first in New York by William Robson, director of Columbia Workshop, produced again at the B.B.C. by Laurence Gilliam with Alistair Cooke advising. Its theme is unemployment. Long lists of place names and their products set the scene.

Narrator: Buffalo and Syracuse.

Statistician: Flour and feed, bread and meat; tin cans and roller bearings, wax candles and soda ash; mincemeat and typewriters, washing machines and light bulbs.

Narrator: Cleveland and Youngstown.

Statistician: Nuts and bolts and printing presses; Diesel engines and multigraph machines; electric batteries and steel forgings.

Narrator: Akron and Toledo.

Statistician: Airplane motors and rubber tyres: fishing tackle and dirigibles; electric batteries and cash registers; medical instruments and fire engines; beer bottles and spark plugs; steel hooks and microphones; spray guns and paper bags.

Voice: This is Industrial America—
The straight line in an automobile works symbolises high pressure industry.

Guide: Ladies and gentlemen, this is the straight line. In two minutes before your very eyes, you will see thirty thousand different pieces of material assembled into one machine.

Voice: Number 7791—
Number 7792—
Number 7793—
Number 7794—
Number 7795—
Number 7796—
Number 7797—
(*Orchestra, time clock and numbers continue background*)

Guide: Two weeks ago these parts were still in the mines of Pennsylvania and West Virginia, the oil fields of Texas and Oklahoma, and the copper vats of Montana, the iron mountains of Minnesota. They have come from the strip mills of Ohio, from the textile mills of the South; tested and checked, processed and perfected in plants as intricate as this.

Along these two steel tracks—half a mile long—you will see steel, iron mountains of Minnesota. They have come from brass, tin, lead, zinc, aluminium, chromium and nickel. You will see rubber, mica, glass, cotton, mohair, all fit into place, magically assembled into one tested perfect piece of machinery, the American automobile. Two days ago these parts were moving through a hundred factories. On a hundred straight lines they received the skill of thousands of men and women in order that they might reach this assembly plant in a state of perfection. You will see a new car drive off the line every half a minute.

Here through the vigilance and skill of workers, inspectors, managers and scientists, men and machines create a perfect instrument.

Here is a saga of human integrity, planning and co-ordination—the glory of industrial America. Here is the straight line!

A phone dialogue between Sales Manager and Time Study Manager leads to a lay-off symbolised by a chorus. The theme becomes personal. Worker No. 7790 applies for relief. But there's work in the West.

7790*:* 7790 headed west . . . in a '36 sedan and 85 bucks in his pocket.

Name, age, occupation.

I remember when we went down to the court-house.

You could see the pines stretching clear across to Virginia then.

You could kick a pheasant out of a laurel bush and go hook a bass at the head of the riffles, and work a corn patch all in one day.

I remember when we went down to the court-house. They had the old boys in the fife corps march with us.

And I remember how Judge Adams got red in the face and waved his arms.

Going to France to save the women and children.

They kept kicking Ben Davis up and getting him on the steps; dead drunk he was.

I remember the kids didn't go to school; they stood on the freight cars and hollered when the train pulled out . . .

It was hot in Chillicothe.

Narrator: 7790 riding with a million men on wheels.

Statistician: The cotton pickers riding on route 90 out of New Orleans for Houston; through to San Anton; North to Oklahoma and Arizona and the new cotton fields.

7790*:* When we came we used to sit on the court-house steps and watch for the new cars going through town . . .

They said it was the war . . . but they cut down the trees while we were away and put up electric light poles on Main Street.

They said times were different: the chemical plant killed the bass clear down past Black's Ford and you'd walk ten miles to find a clear stream.

They put a French '75 in the court-house square and we used to sit all day Sunday talking and looking at the new cars.

Narrator: 7790 riding on the highway of the unemployed.

Statistician: The fruit tramps riding on the Delta road over from Jacksonville across the continent clear to California. Up route 99 for lemons and oranges, prunes and peaches. Up past Fresno and Washington and Oregon for apples.

(*Orchestra:* 1920 *jazz*)

The man said he'd give us all a hundred dollars and our railroad fare.

He said they needed strongboys in the north.

They gave us ten dollars a day in Akron.

We bought silk shirts and got drunk every night.

We stayed out all night and slept at the machines and the foremen used to throw wrenches at us. It was crazy then. You could spend all night at the amusement park and buy silk shirts.

In the body plants you could get twenty dollars if you worked hard.

We were 22 then.

I remember the tough inspector in Detroit. He caught me sitting down and chased me clear out of the plant, and they had my check waiting at the cage as I went by.

Narrator: 7790 riding West on 40—west of the flat corn belts of Indiana and Illinois.

Statistician: The pickers riding west *en route* 80 for lettuce, peas, onions and spinach . . . up 87 to Denver and Sheridan; along the side of the Rockies to Billings and Great Falls for sugar beets.

(*Orchestra: Black Bottom*)

I remember in '27 when the production department said we couldn't weld zinc, and we got the gas tank weld going in six weeks.

They gave us a bonus then.

(*Orchestra: overlap industrial theme*)

I remember in '29 when we built up 15,000 units a day and then they put us on short units, and the married men only got four days a week. Then they got the 20 ton press in Plant No. 10, and got the kids to punch out tops and fenders; kids pushing buttons and punching out body tops and fenders.

Narrator: 7790 heading West, west across the Mississippi.

Statistician: The wheat hands heading west on route 10 out of Minneapolis—west across the Northern table-top to Fargo and Grand Forks; Valley City and Bismarck; over the divide from Miles City to Missoula and Spokane.

Name, age and occupation . . .

They'll sit around the union hall, and the married men will get the first relief cards. They'll go to meetings, and the old men will get the first short time.

They'll talk politics and cuss and wait for the food cards—but there's country in the West I've never seen.

They said the youngsters get all the jobs —but the youngsters never carried duck boards out of Brest . . . the mud up to your knees. They said the bums go West—but they're building dams in the desert, they're cuttin' down mountains in the West.

(*continued on page* 219)

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(*Sound: automobile*)

Narrator: Riding with a million men on wheels.

In Kansas, there's a gas station with an operator who might be Chick Sale. From Alabama, from Texas, from Massachusetts, come men in search of work. The gas station has a tree. "Best shade in Kansas". And in the shadow of the tree the four men tell their personal stories.

Filling Station Operator: Ho hum, yes-sir, best shade in Kansas.

7790*:* Feels good to me, after that hot road.

F.S.O.: You said you're from the East, eh?

7790*:* Yeah.

F.S.O.: How is it back there?

7790*:* Sort of quiet.

* * *

F.S.O.: I never been East, but I was telling mamma the other day. Man sit right here on this porch and meet people from all over.

F.S.O.: Sit down, sit down; like I told this feller—best shade in Kansas.

Texas: Feels good to me. Thanks for the loan of the crowbar.

7790*:* That's all right.

(*Sound: car pulls in*)

F.S.O.: My, my, look at that fellow boil. (*Fade.*) Mamma, bring that water can out; got a fellow on fire here.

Alabama: (*Fade in.*) I thought it got hot in Alabama, but this Kansas, now it's really hot.

F.S.O.: Brother, this is mid-winter to what it was in '36. Now that's when it was hot. I was sittin' right here on this porch, when old man Jones—got 2 section land west over there—comes running in to call the Abiline fire department—his wheat field just naturally blew up and caught fire, so hot. Gospel truth. Spontaneous combustion, or something, they said.

7790*:* I'm going West.

Texas: I'm aimin' for Ioway.

Alabama: Well, I'm headin' East. Thought I'd find some company. My old grandmother always said poor people ought to travel together.

Mass: I'm from the East. I'll tell you about it. My partner and me set the first machinery in the biggest textile mill on the coast. There's no two better mill mechanics in Massachusetts we used to say.

(*Harmonium sneak*).

Mass: And when they shut the mills down in '31 we watched them sitting there; like blind, grey men, with their broken windows, and the fogs drifting in from the Vineyard. We sat there and watched them.

(*Pause*)

Then we took summer people for boat rides and fished for bait and waited.

We helped them tear out the machinery and we watched them take down the brick.

The mills are moving South, they said, but we're New England men.

So we bought a trailer, and we went over to the lakes.

They'll need mill men in the new factories, we said.

It was cold in Michigan. My partner had a dog. But we gave him to a fellow and got a cat. The cat could find his own food.

They didn't need mechanics, they said.

Then we sold the trailer.

My partner took his share and went home. Goin' on relief he figured, but I'm headin' South where the mills are.

If there's cotton mills they'll need machinists, I told him.

There's work in the South.

Alabama: Brother, there's work in the South.

(*Music sneak negro singers*)

There's work for eight million people plantin' cotton, choppin' cotton, pickin' cotton; following the sun in the hot fields.

There's work in the new cotton mills; work enough at eight dollars a week and the lint choking you and the kids and the storeman leaving you behind every Saturday.

* * *

Texas: They took me West when I was six years old. My father moved me from Missouri.

(*Orchestra: sneak—*

Goodbye to Texas)

They said my lungs were bad; that the river was bad for my lungs.

You could see the tan grass waving for a fifty miles out there then.

Nights I used to cry when the Rock Island whistled across the plains; and the coyotes answered.

I used to cry and once I tried to run away. Then they gave me a pony and a heifer of my own, and I never wanted to go back.

When I was 21 my father gave me a section of land, and my brother and I ran three sections in '17.

Then we went to war, and they ploughed up the ranch. They told my father it was patriotic so they ploughed it all while we were away.

They brought the tractors and the combines—fellows used to come clear from Chicago and plant a crop and go away.

Suitcase farmers we called them. They used to plough a thousand acres a week before the dust came. We stuck it six years.

We sat six years and watched the dust. We watched the dust drift over the windows, and it took all fall to push the dust off the fields—so you could raise another crop of dust the next spring.

So we hit the highway in '36.

I'll tell you about the West.

There's work picking cotton at twenty cents an hour, living alongside the road and eating beans and meat the butcher throws away.

There's work in cuttin' grapes, for a cent a tray, money for gas enough to get you to the next camp.

There's work shakin' trees at a dollar a day; and tyres and oil to buy when you move on. And there's the nights in camp, with the children cryin' and the women staring at you so a man ca'nt stand it.

I said I'd drown mine, before I'd raise kids that way, so I'm headin' for Ioway.

My wife's following the crops with my brother, but I'm leavin' the kids with kin in Ioway, so they'll know what a home's like.

Maybe I'll go back.

(*Orchestra: Industrial theme*)

7790*:* They had to let the dynamiters down the side of the canyon on ropes at Boulder Dam. They blew up a mountain and made a lake in a desert and built the highest dam in the world.

Alabama: But you can't eat dams.

7790*:* They're changing the course of the second biggest river in the country at Grand Coulee.

Mass: But they can't figure out how to feed eleven millions of us.

7790*:* They hit quicksand up there, so they stuck brine pipes in and froze 'er, and then dug it out.

Texas: But the big boys have the machines; there's nothing but relief for the little men.

(*Cast and chorus sneak battle hymn of Republic*)

7790*:* There's men and machines and there's room. There'll be water enough for a hundred thousand farms, up there, they say.

Mass: But the big boys have the money.

7790*:* There's room enough for thirty million people—man, they're building the biggest piece of machinery in the world.

Alabama: But what'll you do when they finish?

7790*:* There's room for plenty more. I'm headin' West. If they can make the desert green, maybe they'll build a green city. Maybe there'll be farms for the little boys. But they're moving mountains and I'm headin' West where there's men and machines and room—where there's sun and land and room for a man to move. Where there's a man-sized job. . . .

(*Orchestra and Chorus up to colossal tag*)

LORENTZ lives in a big country. His themes are big. And he is not afraid to handle them big. It was said of *The River* that it humanised nothing. *Job to be Done* humanises a lot. The industrial stuff of the opening can be forgotten. It has been done before and, anyways, is a trick. But the personal stories of the four men fetched up from four parts of the country beneath the best shade in Kansas is new. It shows us Lorentz as a writer of dialogue. And that dialogue is good. It suggests that maybe Lorentz's real field will be that of radio—will be sound and not picture. The visuals of *The Plow* and *The River* were good visuals but they were cameramen's visuals. It was the sound track of *The River*—the narration—that gripped and charmed for all its poetry. In *Job to be Done* it's the speech, the personal intimate stories, that make this one of the best bits of radio of the summer. Gilliam's production was as good as could be done in England. All the Americans and Canadians in London must have been at the B.B.C. that night. And I defy you to remember who was the one Englishman in the cast and that's not counting Mr. Cooke.

TOUGH GUYS, BARNARDO'S and BLANCMANGE

Basil Wright reviews 'Little Tough Guy', 'The Boy from Barnardo's' and 'Kidnapped'.

AFTER the gangsters and the crazy comedies, the costume whimsies and the historical dramas, one may well imagine the Olympians of Beverley Hills scratching their highly polished craniums in the search for a new snack for their hydra-headed pet, the Public. And here it is, in the form of the male adolescent, suitable-lay figure for adventure, and a magnificent coathanger for the samite robes of the Hays organisation. If you *want* to think of sex, say the producers, do so, do so—but don't imagine *we* are going to give you any opportunities. Heil, therefore, Bartholomew! Viva, Rooney! And, after all, it's not a bad thing to have to build your stories round such figures; there are possibilities galore: *Coral Island*, *The Children of the New Forest*, *The Would-be-goods*, *A High Wind in Jamaica*, and, of course, *Kidnapped*—but more of that anon. But it isn't as simple as all that, for there is a rival—a little dishevelled by now—in the shape of the Film With a Certain Amount But Not Too Much Social Content. I speak not of Muni, for his films are far above our present considerations; but with some gall I have to draw your attention to *Little Tough Guy*, featuring all the *Dead End* kids (except Bobby Jordan, who was recently graduated into comedy in *A Slight Case of Murder*).

"Ces nymphes, je veux les perpetuer," sighed apparently the spirit of Universal Pics., Inc., and with a sublime disregard of good sense attempted to do so by a senseless re-hash of the *Dead End* mise en scène.

We have the squalid streets and the squalid rooms, the street boy turning gangster; and the final horrid débâcle converted with nauseous ingenuity into a happy ending. We have everything, in fact, except the one thing that made *Dead End* a goodish film—a basis of reality. *Dead End*, with all its faults, placed before us the outlines of a real and very pressing social problem; its story related to our everyday observation, and its characters were real because their actions were to be explained by environment rather than circumstance. *Little Tough Guy* concentrates only on circumstance, and falls into the same error as Fritz Lang, who, after a genuine success in *Fury*, spoiled everything by a repeat effort (*You Only Live Once*), in which the dice were so ponderously loaded against his hero and heroine that after reel two we were comfortably aware that we needn't bother to believe in them. Here the Boy (Billy Halop, whose visage takes on a greater resemblance to Humphrey Bogart every time a lens opens on it) is assailed by such a frenzy of pointless disasters as even Jude the Obscure might jib at, and his facile descent into Hell is only slightly less dreary and uninteresting than his rocket-like resurrection into a paradise of brass bands and uniforms at a reformatory prize giving. Halop can act, but that is only half a consolation in a film which slowly drags along the ball and chain of an unimaginative and altogether silly feuilleton story.

"Little Tough Guy" is a Universal film directed by Harold Young. "The Boy from Barnardo's" is an M.G.M. film directed by Sam Wood. "Kidnapped" was made by Twentieth Century-Fox, and directed by Alfred Werker. "The Last Night" was produced by Moscow Film Studios and directed by Yu. Raizman.

The Boy from Barnardo's is a very different matter. For one thing, it contains Mickey Rooney, whom I am inclined to regard as being as good an actor as Spencer Tracy, and who, as the Irish Barnardo boy, masters even the good old self-sacrifice for the Pal, with a quite amazing competence. Secondly, it has all the best production values of M.G.M.; settings, camerawork, cast and direction are excellent. Thirdly, and most importantly, its makers have decided on a *genre* and have stuck to it. It is a *genre* I happen to like very much, so maybe my critical faculties have been slightly numbed, but, to all those who read with enjoyment the works of Talbot Baines Reed, especially *The Fifth Form at St. Dominics* and *My Friend Smith*, I am certain this film will make a direct appeal. Despite some acutely embarrassing lines ("I'd prefer to steer a straight course, Sir . . . "), the film has a real simplicity, and a certain sincerity of purpose. The entire length of the plot is visible a few minutes after it begins, and, like the quiet satisfaction of an oft-repeated pleasure, folds us at once beneath its nostalgic wings. And some of the characters, especially Charles Coburn and Herbert Mundin, have an all too rare Dickensian quality.

However, the most important thing to note about the film is that it is a boost, well-deserved we must all agree, and very accurately rendered, of a famous British organisation. It ought indeed to send up the Barnardo donations by fifty per cent. Why then, and I wish someone could give a convincing answer to this question, was it not made by a British film company? By what somnolent thought-process does our industry arrive at its dreary subject-matter when Hollywood steals from it, at least twice a year, the really exciting and extremely box-office subjects that have been sitting in the waiting room ever since Quota raised its Medusa head? And echo answers, "Vy?"

BY the way, Master Freddie Bartholomew plays opposite Mickey Rooney in *The Boy from Barnardo's*. He is getting quite a big boy now, his voice is beginning to break, and there are signs, here and there, that he is beginning to master the rudiments of acting. I mention him because he plays David Balfour to Warner Baxter's Alan Breck Stuart in a film called *Kidnapped*. I read a book of the same name about ten times before I was twelve years old, and I have always retained a great affection for it, as well as a burning memory of most of its major incidents. Lest, therefore, I might be too cantankerous an old fogey to appreciate its present transmogrification, I sought a second opinion in the shape of a downright-thinking and by no means unintelligent Scot. I was glad that his opinion agreed with mine. He found the famous stairway episode admirable, he was struck almost speechless and certainly unprintable by the simpering blancmange of the love interest, and regretted, with extraordinary restraint, what he called "the insult to the men of the clans, who surged around like a crowd of extras (so they were), acclaiming now one silly rallying cry, now its direct negative, or falling into a sudden hush, all with a most un-Scottish unanimity and simpleness of mind".

For my part, in spite of the good opening, I found the whole thing intolerable. Synthetic sets, conventional sentimentality, no shipwreck, no flight across the heather, and, crowning it all, Warner Baxter as Alan Breck. Why not C. Aubrey Smith? Why not George Arliss?

THE *Last Night* is a grimly dramatic picture about the eve of the October Revolution in Russia. It follows the fortunes of an ordinary family through the street fighting and the muddled terrors of that night, and concentrates very largely on the personal tragedies, and the extraordinary *bouleversements* which crowd on each other from moment to moment. Photographed in a low-keyed and slightly sinister style, it achieves, in spite of certain longueurs, an intimate and slightly sentimental study of persons involved in a crisis of the first magnitude. The wider results of this crisis—the realisation of the new freedom to be so hardly won—are reserved for the final sequence. The acting is first class.

BOXING TAYLORS and MILK BAR COWBOYS

Marion Fraser reviews 'The Crowd Roars', 'Gold Is Where You Find It' and 'The Texans'.

IN *The Crowd Roars* Robert Taylor plays in a man's picture for a change. This is an efficiently acted, well polished film with some good fight scenes, which, I think, will appeal to boxing fans. Taylor is the pugilist and, although I am no judge, he appears to do a good job of it. There is a love interest, of course, and Maureen O'Sullivan is it, but this is nicely balanced to the main theme. The story is about a boxer who does not like the racketeering that goes with boxing but is forced to stick with it because he knows nothing else. There is a bit of crookery and a bit of gangsterism, but these are not overstressed. The tail of the plot hangs on the good old gags: the rescue of the girl and the big fight won when the news comes through.

The Crowd Roars might have had a better and more original plot, but I doubt if many films have been made more neatly or efficiently. Moreover it sets Taylor in his place as a capable actor, star value and all that aside. There are plenty of scenes where Taylor displays his fine physique and handsome profile, so there is little chance that the picture will lose on feminine appeal. Trust Hollywood. However, they have the restraint to keep the love story in the background and Taylor is allowed a chance to do some real acting outside love scenes.

The finish of the big fight and of the film is sufficiently exciting but not exciting enough to justify the title. Better sound-cutting might have done the trick.

THOUSANDS of head of cattle driving across the Rio Grande, milling through dust storms, swimming across rivers, stampeding along a railway track—those are the spectacles in *The Texans*, a Paramount job that has all the elements of a good Western. There are space and air and fine scenery; there are Indians and cowboys and police patrols; there is a beautiful heroine and a brave hero. With all those it is a film well above the average summer-time fare, but if you are thinking of *The Plainsman* I am afraid you will be disappointed.

It is certainly not as fine a film as *The Plainsman*. The Western, as we know it after a long acquaintanceship, has, or should have, a real villain one can hiss in good earnest. The hero must be dashing and spectacular as well as brave. The heroine should be sweet and timid as well as beautiful. The Indians should be bloodthirsty and murderous; the cowboys tough and crude.

According to these long-established traditions *The Texans* is a milk-and-water affair and the excuse that it is historical does not wash. No slice of American history worth its salt should present us with Indians that look more fitted for an acrobatic act in a circus than for good honest scalping forays. Joan Bennett, the heroine, is much too capable of looking after herself, and Randolph Scott, the hero, much too much of a worm, even though he does turn eventually. Another thing, when cowboys sing, one does not expect them to sing so obviously to the microphone.

This leaves only the cattle uncriticised. Actually the cattle are pretty good, and the cameramen who shot them on the move, the real heroes of this film.

CLAUDE RAINS has been in better pictures than *Gold is Where You Find It*. The title sounds deeply moral, but there is no need for trepidation. There really is gold-mining and there are some beautiful shots of high-pressure hoses busy washing away hill-sides. The story tries to prove that it is a far better thing to grow fruit than to mine for gold. The second meaning of gold applies to Californian fruit which we see in Technicolor—and very pretty the peaches look too. All they forget is to show the labels on the tins.

I don't know how they process Technicolor, but the introductory shots of gold mining are suffused wtih a golden hue. It is an interesting trick and might be used intelligently to great purpose. Returning to the film—it is always a great pleasure to watch Claude Rains at work. He does a fine job of acting in a part that allows him a good deal of scope. He almost proves that agriculture is the thing.

"The Crowd Roars" is an M.G.M. picture, directed by Richard Thorpe. "Gold is Where You Find It" is a Warner picture, Director: Michael Curtiz, and "The Texans" comes from Paramount with James Hogan directing.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS

Edited by
H. E. BLYTH

W. F. N. Selection

The Last Night	* *
Little Tough Guy	*
Gold Is Where You Find It	*
Fast Company	*

Other Films Covered in this Issue

Boy Meets Girl (*stars reserved*)

The Texans

The Rage of Paris

Shopworn Angel

Having Wonderful Time

Algiers

The Sheik

The Boy From Barnardo's

Liszt Rhapsody

Boy Meets Girl

(Lloyd Bacon—Warner Brothers).
James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, Marie Wilson, Ralph Bellamy.

The famous Spewack comedy that provided Broadway with some of its liveliest laughs and critics with their quickest form of plot analysis has finally worked its dizzy way to the screen. One of the most fortunate experiences to be had this summer is to be sitting there when the fun starts. Pat O'Brien and James Cagney are the screenwriters now, two zanies who concoct weird plots and weirder ways of working them out, who adopt an unborn baby, and clown themselves out of one ferocious moment into another. Marie Wilson, the starry-eyed, is Susie the studio waitress, and her gentle naïveté is perfect counterpoint for the screaming sarcasm of the screenplay. No more vicious picture of picture-making has ever been painted, and it is to Warner Brothers' credit that no stone of satire was left unturned in this screen version. It is also to their credit, and to the eternal ambidexterity of the Spewack pen that *Boy Meets Girl* is as good a picture as it was a play. No element of cinematic production is left with a shred of dignity. That is a lusty portent in these days of blame-laying, and no shrewder self-inventory has been evident in a long time. Everything is fast and funny—from the script to the edited print, from the smallest bit to the principal roles, from the sound effects to the direction. A few of those beautifully bawdy lines have been placed on Mr. Hays' shelf, but their lack is made up for with resourceful gag invention. *Oh boy.*

—*The Stage*

The Rage of Paris

(Henry Koster—Universal).
Danielle Darrieux, Douglas Fairbanks, jun., Mischa Auer.

Danielle Darrieux's coming-out party, in *The Rage of Paris* and Universal, was one long bath of cuteness which we are willing to condone only if the producers promise to sin no more. Being an expert comedienne, the French actress was able to get by with it, but if they don't watch their step they'll be converting a talented and lovely young star into a grown-up Shirley Temple. Fortunately, we had the memories of the French *Mayerling* and *Club de Femmes* to serve as palliatives; we knew that Miss Darrieux could act as well as purse her lips and rub a trim little dernière after a window sash had fallen upon it. It was quite obvious all the way through that Universal was anxious to exhibit its new leading lady only in light comedy poses. It's gay enough and we're too fond of Miss Darrieux to say we minded terribly, but, now that the letter of introduction has been posted, Universal has some real work to do.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

Fast Company

(Edward Buzzell—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer).
Melvyn Douglas, Florence Rice, Claire Dodd.

Fast Company concerns crooks who steal rare books, fake first editions, and scrap over these pieces of printed paper with as much bitterness as they would over banknotes. Melvyn Douglas, special investigator married to secretary Florence Rice, sets out to discover who stole what and who killed whom. Inevitably, any husband-and-wife comedy-mystery nowadays must be compared with *The Thin Man*, and this one doesn't suffer greatly by comparison. The dialogue crackles like a sub-machine gun, and the plot has as many twists as the trail of a crook in flight. Besides which, Melvyn Douglas and Florence Rice demonstrate long-distance kissing to perfection. If you want to learn how to kiss your wife when you're ten yards apart, go along and see how it is done.

—Moore Raymond, *Sunday Dispatch*

Fast Company gives Melvyn Douglas another "Powell part"—a murder mystery to be solved by a cheery married couple. You know the sort of thing. It has made good stock for several amusing confections recently but this particular pie contains a happy supply of garnishing and spice while its crust has a shine and design that help to make the whole thing most appetising. Melvyn Douglas could not be bettered in the role, a rare-book dealer up against a racket, and Florence Rice is extremely attractive as his playful wife-secretary. Some of their dialogue is really funny. Claire Dodd is worth watching too.

—F.S., *The Sunday Express*

Shopworn Angel

(H. C. Potter—Metro-Goldwyn-Meyer).
Margaret Sullavan, James Stewart, Walter Pidgeon.

Shopworn Angel is an inexcusable morass about a Texas hayseed who falls into ideal love with a Broadway star while on his way to win the war in 1917. The lady's fancy man agrees that the lady should marry the boy just to crown his happiness and on condition that he doesn't miss the troop-train immediately after the ceremony. So the star goes on singing, and the fancy man goes on gazing at her until a letter arrives from France containing an identification disc. All this is acted for ten times more than it is worth by Walter Pidgeon, Margaret Sullavan, and James Stewart—ascending in that order, and the first is pretty high. Stewart's performance as the hayseed is in the same class with the best things Gary Cooper has done; he is expert at batting an eyelid. I confess to shameful and complete enjoyment of every false sentiment in this film; it is marvellously well done and well directed, and you can hear the sobbing, when there is not too much traffic about, in the street outside.

—James Agate, *The Tatler*

The notion of the reform of a corrupt civilization by the noble savage is certainly universal and a great deal older than Rousseau, but the particular form that it takes in this film is intensely American. For the savage is an extreme example of a characteristic American hero, a cowboy enlisted for the wars, bewildered in New York, unable to understand its jokes, and with an inarticulate virtue which even the most dissolute New Yorker seems anxious to protect. This charming character, whom Mr. James Stewart certainly makes irresistible, has an immediate and positively magical effect on a lazy, selfish, and shallowly

sophisticated actress (Miss Margaret Sullavan). He teaches her to rise early in the morning, enjoy the country, and perceive the advantages of marriage, and for this she is so grateful that, although she loves another man, she marries him when he is on the point of sailing for the front. The whole theme is, of course, preposterously sentimental, but Mr. Stewart contrives to make one suspend one's disbelief in such savages, and the whole story is developed with tact and skilful direction.

—*The Times*

Critical Summary.

The young American of the Middle West has always had the power to charm the jaded European, for in this older civilization of ours manners seems to have come dangerously near to suppressing spontaneity, and the simplicity that may be regarded as the twin sister of spontaneity is a relationship foreign to those outside the American continent. And because of this Mr. James Stewart's Middle West farmer, though he is dressed in the khaki uniform of the patriot, commands our feelings and so stimulates our imagination that we almost regret the passing of an age that was simple though primitive. Such is the force of Mr. Stewart's sincerity that Miss Margaret Sullavan's disillusioned woman of the world suggests a European pedigree.

Little Tough Guy

(Harold Young—Universal).
Billy Halop and the "Dead End Kids", Jackie Searl.

The film is well able to expose social evils and injustices, and the method by which the American producer generally launches his attack suggests that every American is at heart something of a sociologist. It is difficult at times to say precisely what the nature of this indictment is for no one particular problem or evil receives the undivided attention of the director. Here the first scene brings in the main protagonist. He is the son of a father who has accidentally killed a man during a strike. He is condemned to death, and his only chance of escape is a second trial. The family he leaves behind—his wife, son and daughter—receive no help from their neighbours and indeed are forced to leave the district for another and even more squalid one. Their departure, however, as stated in the film, suggests a life of deprivation and extreme hardship in their endeavour both to live and yet to find sufficient money for their father's second trial. But it is no more than a suggestion. As soon as they are in their new slum tenement it becomes apparent that the film is not going to devote itself to a particular study of one family but to a general description of the surroundings and behaviour of those who live in them. The half dozen young hooligans, led naturally by Johnny Boylan and "Pig", dominate the scene, and the attention of the spectator is immediately taken away from the main issue and riveted on another and smaller problem—the effect of the gang on the young son. And true to the familiar formula the newcomer proves to be the toughest of the lot. But it is a toughness that is terribly impressive, for it is a façade that hides and protects a mind overwhelmed by the horror of the world's injustice. In a single scene—when the boy and another are trapped in a shop by the police—the sight of the revolver in Johnny's hand seems a natural weapon for a boy whose resentment against society has unhappily come in his adolescent years. Our sympathy

". . . promises to sin no more"

is for Johnny, and had the film attempted to explain his attitude and to understand his problems it might well have been a powerful indictment against society and the means of raising the standard of education and of lowering America's pride in her reformatories.

—A.B.C., *World Film News*

The world makes its mark on the hero of *Little Tough Guy* when he is very young and impressions are the strongest. His father has been condemned to death for accidentally killing a man, and the resentment aroused by this act of injustice leads to the boy becoming head of a gang of young hooligans and outlaws. The climax of the film occurs when the boy comes to his inevitable end. He is trapped in a small shop, but cannot believe that he can safely surrender. Obviously the police, who are prepared to kill the father, will make no bones about shooting the son. The film is exciting to watch, but we are to suppose that something lies behind it, though what that may be is difficult to define. But perhaps we need not worry too much. It is nice to think that some social good may result from *Little Tough Guy*. What affects one at the moment is that it is grandly acted by some of the kids who were in *Dead End*, and makes a very good way of spending an evening.

—James Agate, *The Tatler*

Having Wonderful Time

(Alfred Santell—RKO Radio).
Ginger Rogers, Douglas Fairbanks, jun., Peggy Conklin.

In the charm of the young people whom Mr. Kober describes, in their eagerness and unexpected little anxieties, their precise culture, and some of their very human qualities, which he has caught so perfectly, there is a hint at times of an author of a very different world, even of Thrums. It has occurred to me that Mr. Kober may turn out to be a Barrie of his own world, a Bronx Barrie, which should be no title to be scorned. Unlike the play, the movie is about no special people—just about any one of us. In the ingenuous language of the trade, the film has been "de-raced;" and this "de-racing" seems to show that there really isn't much difference in people anyhow.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

Arthur Kober's quaint little drama of the Bronx Jew in the Catskill moonlight will never be forgotten in this quarter. It was lovable, folksy, and true. The screenplay made from this distinguished stage presentation is none of these. Mr. Kober is still listed as its author, a fact that must have torn his heart as well as his lines out. It does not mean, however, that you see Teddy and Chick and scores of typical Bronxites trying desperately and hilariously to adjust themselves to rugged sociability. It is a well-groomed typist we see now (Ginger Rogers) and a strangely "couth" Chick (Douglas Fairbanks, jun.). who enact their little story of quick-service romance. There is a background of camp life which still has mannerisms and dialectics from the original, but it's folk drama without the folks now. Along this new path the director has added gags and scenes and bits of variety that make the picture lots of fun (the backgammon game, the *Heigh-Ho* motif), and there is an unalterable quality of good fellowship; but it's not the Kamp Kare-Free we remember with such pleasure. Perhaps this is unfair. Perhaps we should remember that we had a wonderful enough time at the new *Having Wonderful Time. Oh! but it could have been so much more wonderful.*

—*The Stage*

Algiers

(John Cromwell—United Artists).
Charles Boyer, Sigrid Gurie, Hedy Lamarr.

With a superb clarity, we are shown the Casbah, slum district of a hot Algerian town where Pépé le Moko is king. Pépé is a famous underworld figure who dominates his Casbah kingdom with heartiness and generosity. The little plottings of the picture take place in this squalid, labyrinthine section and a more realistic setting for a drama of glamour is hard to imagine. The exotic fantasy of Pépé and his hideout subjects has a firmness and a gentle imaginative quality that give it many moments of beauty. Cooped up as the story is in these tedious surroundings, it suffers sometimes from repetition and inaction. The monotony in the lives of the characters somehow seeps into the continuity, yet there is a strange emphasis in the sameness of its mood. Charles Boyer is impressive in his role as the impulsive Pépé, and Joseph Calleia strikes a difficult sympathetic note as the sinister Casbah commissioner.

—*Stage*

The Casbah, the native quarter of Algiers, is a maze of crooked alleyways, terraces, winding flights of steps. A man such as Pépé le Moko, wanted by the French police, might go in safety there until he dies, chatting with the police inspector daily, secure in his sanctuary but equally sure of arrest the moment he leaves it. But a man such as Pépé le Moko, with the perfume of the boulevards in his nostrils, could not endure being the Casbah's prisoner all his life. Nostalgia would drive him out, or love for a woman. Inspector Slimane knew that when he smiled at Pépé every day. He was content to wait.

That is the theme of *Algiers*. It is a fascinating drama of a manhunt, a manhunt made all the more relentless because the hunters never really give pursuit, because the hunted never really is in flight. There are terror and suspense in a chase, but there are still more when the cat plays a waiting game, and the mouse creeps obediently, helplessly into its claws. John Cromwell, who has directed the film, has wound the drama's mainspring tight. Its seconds tick off like a pulsebeat in an accelerating rhythm of destiny—hopeless, inexorable, tragic destiny. Few films this season or any other, have sustained their mood so brilliantly.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

The Sheik

(George Melford—Paramount).
Rudolph Valentino, Agnes Ayres, Adolphe Menjou.

"When you go amongst women," said Nietzsche, "don't forget your whip." And the interesting thing about this philosophy is that it seems to find its warmest admirers amongst women. Male authors through the centuries may praise the chivalry, the sentimentality, of the Man of Feeling, they may weep over Richardson's heroines (hard-pressed in 50 instalments) and Dickens' Nancy, victim of a cruel man's lust. Women seem to find all this fuss rather tiresome. Is it a racial memory, a hangover from the old chattel days, or just one phase of that tendency to worship the strange, the enormous and the terrible, which is the basis of the Romantic Movement in literature and Totalitarianism in politics?

Whatever the answer, it is a fact that some of the most popular and (from the psychological point of view) most significant writers of our time have derived their appeal from the masochistic instinct of women readers. Miss Ethel Dell wrote of the strong, ugly Nordic hero who ruthlessly killed enemies and galloped horses to death; Miss E. M. Hull of the desert chieftain (also revealed to be Nordic in the last chapter) who kidnapped the proud heroine, laughed at her threats, humbled her pride, subdued her to his will, and was at last rewarded with her love. The position of the heroine of this school is approximately that of the high-spirited filly which learns to like bridle and saddle and come whinnying for a nice piece of sugar at sound of the master's step. This, apparently, is what the average woman enjoys—vicariously, at all events, in fiction. That the appeal of *The Sheik* was in its psychology rather than its literary graces is clear from the fact that the tale had an even more sensational success when Paramount brought it to the screen, with Rudolph Valentino as the Sheik Ahmed Ben Hassan, and Agnes Ayres as Lady Diana Mayo, the "beautiful, haughty English tourist".

For Valentino *The Sheik* completed what *The Four Horsemen* had begun; women fans in six continents talked of no one else. Earlier stars—Maurice Costello, Earle Williams, William Farnum, Francis X. Bushman, Wallace Reed—had been admired, even loved.

With Valentino we detect a new note of passion, often verging on hysteria. Thousands of silly, adoring creatures wrote begging not merely for photographs, letters, souvenirs, but for a rendezvous. They were sure that if they could only meet him they could win his love; and if afterwards they were cast off, no matter; they would count an hour or two happiness enough. All of which was madly gratifying to his employers and bewildering to the nice, bourgeois young man whose real ambition has always been to be a farmer.

Valentino's extraordinary life and fantastic death and funeral do not concern us here; one can only speculate, looking at *The Sheik*, on what it was about him that stirred women everywhere so strangely.

Well, in the first place, he was uncommonly handsome. He was not tall—about five feet nine, at a guess—but his figure was well proportioned and muscular, his head well shaped and his face young and vital. His mouth was firmly chiselled, his jaw was lean, his nostrils had a flare that hinted at cruelty. His eyes had a Latin warmth which not even the naïveté of the sentiments he was called upon to express can wholly disguise; and I imagine that in real life, with no need to leer down at captive blondes while the camera turned and the director shouted orders ("Grab her wrist—laugh at the knife—you've got her in your power!"), his smile was singularly charming. All these things helped, but were they enough to account for the effect he had on women? I have reflected carefully, since seeing *The Sheik* again, on Valentino's qualities and the parts he played in relation to stars who came before and after him, and I think I know the answer. His appeal was due to the fact that he was the first hero frankly to exploit sex.

In earlier films the leading man was properly heroic; villains might think of sex; the hero, before the shy proposal at the garden shrine, never. This tradition still lingers on in Westerns, where the hero, no matter how burning the Texas sun, invariably removes his Stetson when about to propose marriage.

Valentino, for the first time, combined the sex menace of the scoundrel with the good looks and charm of the hero: and the effect on women was devastating. The menace, the challenge to virtue and pride, were still there, but it was a menace they only half feared, an attack to which they longed to surrender. The combined effect of good looks and virility in the loved one, and masochism, the desire to abase oneself, in the loving, produced such a wave of hysterical devotion as no other man has inspired before or since.

Valentino, after his death, became a cult, still kept up by clubs which bear his name and keep his memory green for worthy purposes. I advise his followers—now diminishing, I suppose—not to see *The Sheik* again; the story that thrilled millions is now much funnier than the new Laurel and Hardy or Harold Lloyd. Try as you will to follow the story sympathetically, you find yourself continually rocking at the orgy of eye-rolling, leers, and proud tossings of the head, the violent starts of surprise and gusty sighs,which belonged to a technique as ludicrous to-day as the "Aha's" and boot-slapping and green lights of *Sweeny Todd*.

If you have ever mourned the passing of the silents, if you feel tempted, as we all do sometimes, to lament the days when actors were really actors and films kept us on the edge of our seat, you have only to see *The Sheik* to realise that the fault is not in the stars, but in ourselves. We were young, and we are not; and whatever compensations the years may bring, they take away the first essential of the fan; I mean the capacity for wonder.

—Campbell Dixon, *The Daily Telegraph*

Critical Summary.

Not even a surrealist need have feared Mr. Rudolph Valentino as the subject of his painting. Whatever false colours the painter cared to use, the sitter would always have found admirers to detect in the finished portrait the true embodiment of their own desires. Whether he was upright, crooked or bedridden, the figure of Mr. Valentino was sure to dominate at least half the feminine world. His kisses, like the rays of a brilliant sun, scorched the lips of all in his arid deserts. His glances were either welcome threats or pleasurable requests; his anger a sign of virility, his silences a sure indication of the nobility, or as many would have it, the ignobility of his thoughts. In common with Napoleon, he had hopes of joining the East with the West.

Gold Is Where You Find It

(Michael Curtiz—Warner Bros.).
Claude Rains, George Brent, Olivia de Havilland.

The time is 1877; the place the Sacramento Valley in California; the quarrel, between the farmers in the valley and the miners above, who, by means of high-pressure streams of water from "hydraulic monitors" are washing the hillside away in their search for gold and smothering the wheatfields below with gallons of liquid mud. In its way it is a great theme, and the film, which is in Technicolor, treats it well. Some of the colour in these scenes is extraordinarily fine, and so is some of the acting: Claude Rains, for example, is admirable as the active, dignified, conscientious leader of the farmers. But after nearly two hours of fine, genuinely beautiful scenes, the film has to end on a sort of Art Plate line—two lovers silhouetted beside No. 6 salmon-red artificial sunset. This is, to put it mildly, a pity. I advise you to leave at the end of the court scene.

—R. M., *Punch*

Gold Is Where You Find It is good old-fashioned cinema: a war between brutal gold miners, assisted by unscrupulous money-bosses and slimy lawyers, and simple farmers whose land is being ruined by the mud from the mines. Miss Olivia de Havilland comes out rather beautifully in Technicolor, and Mr. George Brent is the hero—it's that kind of film: a Montague-Capulet plot and decorative Victorian dresses and a waster's heroic death and a bar-room fight and a sermon from the bench and a fade-out at sunset. Technicolor is at its dubious best in a picture like this—though the painted backgrounds in the long shots are dreadful: it all adds to the delicious self-pity, the glowing adolescent agony. It's jam but good jam—with a few better moments you don't often find in films like this, and Mr. Claude Rains, as the farmers' leader, is chiefly responsible for these. His precise, fine voice can give a chisel edge to the flatest sentiments.

—Graham Greene, *The Spectator*

The Boy from Barnardo's

(Sam Wood—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer).
Freddie Bartholomew, Mickey Rooney, Herbert Mundin, Gale Sondergaard.

How curious it is that the very qualities the director of *The Boy From Barnardo's* finds commendable should prove from our standpoint despicable. Some admirable sentiments as to the loyalty to be expected from members of the school strike on the ear with the force of "boloney", to use an American term. Nationally, I think we have a strong dislike of parading the efficiency and merits of our public institutions and services, and there is much to be said for a policy that allows good to speak for itself without exploding into plauditions that smell perilously of propaganda. All through this film I had an uncomfortable suspicion, which I was assured was unjustified, that the picture had been subsidised partly by Dr. Barnardo's Homes and partly by the Cunard Company, so flawless were each of these enterprises shown to be and so superior to criticism. Cheques for a million dollars from each concern would be inadequate rewards.

—Sydney W. Carroll, *The Sunday Times*

This film has been less favourably received by many critics than *Little Tough Guy*, but it seems to us very much better entertainment. The story is ingenuous, and the script undistinguished, but the photography is pleasing and the pace tolerably fast. Those of us who, some thirty years ago, endured lantern-lectures at our prep. schools about "The Largest Family in the World" will recognise that this film represents a staggering progress in the publicity-methods of the Barnardo Homes, but the entertainment is very brief compared with films about children made on the Continent. Mr. Bartholomew is admirable in the early part of the film, though his regeneration does not convince. Hollywood has made a laudable effort to keep out the American accent, but we doubt if old Barnardo boys would recognise their school. If you can see the uplift about *esprit de corps*, the *Queen Mary* and all that, this film is excellent entertainment.

—*The New Statesman and Nation*

Liszt Rhapsody

(Carmine Gallone—German).

Liszt Rhapsody rambles with demure gaiety and occasional dignity through the ornate salons of the sixties, picking up music wherever it goes. It is a very pleasant piece, but it does ramble! The story, lifted from a novel by Ernst von Wolzogen, sets forth a young pianist's trials and tribulations caused (*a*) by his pretty pupil's slaughter of Liszt's Rhapsody, (*b*) by his pretty pupil's charms, and (*c*) by an unworthy rival's slanderous attacks. A gentle story, directed by Carmine Gallone with due appreciation of the arts and graces of its subject, though inclined to skip from place to place with slightly disconcerting suddenness. Admirably played by the whole company and carried "on the wings of music" to a happy climax, the picture, with its polished settings, beguiles the eye and the ear alike.

—M. E. M., *The Sketch*

As for *Liszt Rhapsody*, it is a routine German musical romance with more humour and less beer and balloons than usual. A lot of the picture is shot in Rome—very pleasantly, with broken pillars and wild flowers and period parasols, but with no purpose that I can see, except to advertise the strength of the Rome-Berlin axis. The Teutons in their tight trousers strut amiably like cocks, lifting up their little claws disdaining bird seed, setting all the hens in a bustle of love or hate, and Liszt himself—that doubtful dog—appears angelically to help the young people to pair off.

—Graham Greene, *The Spectator*

SEPTEMBER RELEASES

Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs (RKO Radio) ***
PRODUCER: Walt Disney
(Reviewed April)

The Hurricane (United Artists) *
DIRECTOR: John Ford
STARRING: Jon Hall, Dorothy Lamour, Raymond Massey, Mary Astor
(Reviewed February)

Test Pilot (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: Victor Fleming
STARRING: Clark Gable, Myrna Loy, Spencer Tracy
(Reviewed July)

A Yank at Oxford (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: Jack Conway
STARRING: Robert Taylor, Maureen O'Sullivan, Griffith Jones, Vivien Leigh, Lionel Barrymore
(Reviewed May–June)

Bluebeard's Eighth Wife (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Ernst Lubitsch
STARRING: Gary Cooper, Claudette Colbert
(Reviewed May–June)

Mad About Music (Universal)
DIRECTOR: Norman Taurog
STARRING: Deanna Durbin, Herbert Marshall, Gail Patrick
(Reviewed May–June)

Tovarich (Warner Brothers)
DIRECTOR: Anatole Litvak
STARRING: Charles Boyer, Claudette Colbert, Basil Rathbone
(Reviewed March)

The First Hundred Years (M.G.M.)
DIRECTOR: Richard Thorpe
STARRING: Robert Montgomery, Virginia Bruce

Sally, Irene and Mary (Twentieth Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: William A. Seiter
STARRING: Alice Faye, Tony Martin, Jimmy Durante, Gregory Ratoff

Walking Down Broadway (Twentieth Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: Norman Foster
STARRING: Claire Trevor, Phyllis Brooks, Michael Whalen

Texas Trail (Paramount)
DIRECTOR: Dave Selman
STARRING: William Boyd, Russell Haydon, George Hayes

Flea with Me

Blood donors are being sought among the Paramount studio property men to provide nourishment for Sam and Sadie, the 'human' fleas sent to Hollywood from Hubert's Museum Flea Circus in New York City, which will appear in 'Zaza'.

Instructions from the circus were to the effect that these were not cat or dog fleas but 'human' fleas imported from Europe and require human blood for nourishment.

A bonus of of 100 *dollars was offered for any property man who would serve as a 'flea commissary' during the fleas' engagement. There have been no takers.*

—News Item

Another striking example of the way the best talent of all worlds is drawn into the Hollywood vortex. It is reported that hundreds of film-struck fleas are making the long hop to the coast and the Central Casting Bureau are being worried all day long by the persistence of the visitors. "We have had so many drop in on us just lately," said an official, rubbing the small of his back meditatively against a projection, "that we have some difficulty in keeping track of their movements." A number of tough flea aspirants, laughingly referred to as the "Dead End Kids", have been making themselves felt at smart Beverley Hills soirées, and there have been several ugly scenes between the tiny visitors and the germs who appeared in *Yellow Jack*, who not unnaturally resent the invasion.

A well-known Hollywood director said: "I would not advise any flea to give up a good position to come to Hollywood. The best jobs are already filled and the best a flea can hope for is 'bits'. There is only hunger and heartbreak in Hollywood for fleas, even though a lot of other germs have managed to carve an itch for themselves."

An interesting echo on this subject reaches us from an English studio. A small frustrated-looking man who had been seen hanging around the lot for some weeks was eventually identified as a 'flea canteen' attached to the cast of a new production entitled *A Leap in the Dark*, described as a biting portrayal of back-stage life in a flea-circus, its set-backs and sudden tragedies, set against a vivid human background.

It is said to be fascinating to watch how these flea film-stars model their styles of acting on those of famous human players. One of the fleas has been seen around in goloshes and a mackintosh, snubbing people.

"The chief difficulty is to find enough human blood for them in a film studio," said a well-known producer, treading something into the carpet with a light laugh.

FOOT SLOGGER

Alice Faye came out of a scuffle with Warner Baxter in "By the Dawn's Early Light" with a swollen jaw the other day. And you didn't have to ask which side of Baxter's face stopped her slipper.

—News Item.

Oh, I'll never covet
(Though others may love it)
The gaining of fame—it's a bore;
Nor have I a yen for
A shinier ten-four
Than that of the people next door—
Nor crave I the job as the Queen Mary's skipper
Half as much as a slap from Miss Alice Faye's slipper.

Now your pet ambition
May be for position,
Or maybe on titles you're keen.
While *you*, sir, may struggle
For wealth, so you'll juggle
Your way to a job on the screen.
But only one thing have *I* craved since a nipper—
And that is a wallop from Alice Faye's slipper.

Oh, I've received bruises
From all sorts of floosies
And scars from their furious beaux;
The surgeon's sharp scissors
Have left me some fizzers
Which I'm always ready to show.
But the scar I'd display with the speed of a zipper
Would be the one made by Miss Alice Faye's slipper.

Now some men make much of
The oft-quoted touch of
A warm summer breeze from the south,
While other men favour
The good frothy flavour
Old ale's apt to leave round the mouth.
But the touch on the face I'd consider a ripper.
Would be made by the heel of Miss Alice Faye's slipper.

Not a lady-like knock
But a real good sock—
Yes, a sock on the kisser from Alice Faye's slipper.

SPORTS BULLETIN

Robert Taylor is giving Barbara Stanwyck a tennis court for a birthday present.

—News Item

He must have been letting the grass grow under his feet.

STOP PRESS NEWS

Owing to action by the Censorship Office we regret that Snooks Grieser's contribution to this page will not appear, as was announced in last month's issue. Leading figures in public life to whom we showed the rough draft described it variously as scurrilous, anti-social and a blow at the very roots of British home-life and right thinking. Even with the limericks taken out it was condemned.

It is hoped that Grieser, who is at present being held by the Skegness police in connection with a fracas at a holiday camp, will be released in time to submit a more suitable contribution to the October issue.

An alternative column, submitted by Grieser's mother, described as a witty, well-informed causerie of Stepney society and entitled "Round the Boozers," was even worse. It even shocked our secretary.

Thoughts in a Restaurant, not a million miles from Piccadilly

The food on other people's dishes
Always looks much more delicious
Than the heap of skin and bone
Served to us upon our own.
Other people's food and liquor
Seems to reach them so much quicker—
But this is what makes *me* so truculent—
It always *sounds* so much more succulent.

A film-loving lady of Surbiton
Left the stove she was steaming some turbot on.
When she came back at nine
The cat had done fine
And her husband had left her, but she should worry,
she'd just been to a cinema that had
a film featuring Hugh Herbert on.

SAYINGS

"If you play Bach in America you starve to death."—*Fats Waller.*

"Wherever there is a Lady Godiva there always seems to be trouble."—*A High Wycombe carnival organiser.*

...ORUM

TIME MARCHES ON: Sweating Slightly

More euphonious telephone bells, lights, soft buzzers—"or some device less liable to distract the household or disturb invalids and children"—are suggested by the Socialist M.P. for West Leyton.
—News Item.

How well the film fraternity are looked after by our Socialist M.P.'s is indicated by that telling phrase—"less liable to distract invalids and children."

I have been worrying my pretty little head (it's my brother who has the two heads) a good deal lately about this vexed question of more euphonious telephone bells. I even went further than that. Why, I reasoned, should the telephone's duty be limited to attracting our attention to the fact that someone has called our number by mistake? Why indeed! Think of the hundred and one other helpful little actions it could be made to perform.

With me, to think is to act. Night after night, behind the sealed doors of the W.F.N. Research Laboratories, I slaved over hot retorts and when at last I straightened up I held in my hand the first humanised telephone, if you can imagine that.

You can't? Well, let me explain it for you. With that well-known whimsicality that has caused many a bottle to be tossed laughingly at me across saloons, I have called my invention "Fussy Fanny", after an aunt of mine called Fussy Fanny.

Occupying not more than 100 square feet when in repose, it is obvious that "Fussy Fanny" will not in any way clutter a film executive's desk or cause him to feel embarrassed. When a subscriber rings the executive's number it causes a small loudspeaker on a metal arm to shoot out to within two inches of the executive's ear. Here it stops, quivering, and if you have ever been within two inches of an executive's ear you will know why.

Now the chances are that the executive is (a) asleep; (b) in a trance, thinking lovely pale blue thoughts about the lift-girl; (c) unable to answer because his finger is jammed in the top drawer where he keeps his cachous.

Let us suppose that the executive is asleep—nothing wrong in that, is there? Very well—upon receiving no reply, a small voice from the loudspeaker says "Yoo-hoo, Mr. Ginsberg!" If there is still no response, the machine, in a rather louder voice, says "Snap out of it, you big slob."

Here the executive stirs, his little cheeks flushed with sleep, and murmurs something about percentages. At this the machine gets really mad, and, taking a step back, fetches the executive a smart bust in the snoot. Executives being what they are, there is very little chance of the machine missing. The executive opens one eye and stifles a yawn with a dimpled hand. This is the chance the machine has been waiting for. "You're wanted on the telephone, Mr. Ginsberg," it says. "Let's answer it, shall we?" It then proceeds to do up any odd buttons that may be undone, brush the cigar-ash from his waistcoat and with infinite tenderness remove an errant lock of hair that has fallen roguishly over his eyes. The machine then punches him in the kidneys and retires archly to a far corner, where it peeps at him round the filing-cabinet. "Catch me if you can," it pipes and such a chase follows as you never saw. Over the furniture, in and out of the cloakrooms (and on one memorable occasion, right down the lift-shaft!)—with Fussy Fanny always one jump ahead of its plump little pursuer.

For an extra two pounds the machine can be fitted with a special attachment which, in the event of a subscriber ringing, removes the secretary from the executive's knee and takes her into a corner where it talks to her gravely about the danger of such behaviour. And hardly is the secretary out of the door, sobbing as if her shoulder-straps would break, before Fussy Fanny has taken a running jump on to the executive's knee and is twining a coy metal finger in one of the frayed button-holes of the man's hacking-jacket. Ah, youth! youth!

LOVE and HISSES

I'm glad there's not another
Ritz Brother.

I often give thanks
For Leslie Banks.

Tyrone Power
Makes me glower.

Claude Rains
Would seem to have brains

I could easily fall
For Evelyn Dall.

We would do much better to contemplate
our nivals
Than a good many of these revivals.

Robert Flaherty
Is the life of the paherty.

I really can see no
Reason for bringing back the films of
Valentino.

Hell—another "A" film!

"N.S."

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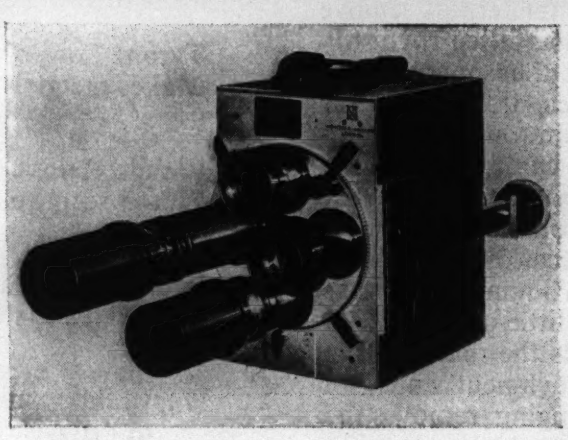

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THE ONLY BRITISH TECHNICAL JOURNAL PUBLISHED BY FILM TECHNICIANS FOR FILM TECHNICIANS

"I MUST THANK ALISTAIR COOKE"

writes Radio critic George Audit who discusses the successful items of American life that have enlivened a dull month's programmes.

LOOKING back over the weeks of hotel music and seaside entertainment that fill the programme time while B.B.C. producers are on holiday with (as they suppose) their listeners, I must thank Mr. Alistair Cooke for the few outstanding items.

Before I go on to describe Mr. Cooke's remarkable programmes I must briefly mention Mr. D. G. Bridson's work during the summer. Not that he is now in any danger of being overlooked, as he was for so long. London is now only too glad to relay one of his shows to brighten up an evening's entertainment. For he is still the only practising producer with an unerring sense of radio. He can make a feature of anything from an industry to an eighteenth century novel without getting lost in his subject or his material. His programmes on Cotton, Wool, and the Sterne's Sentimental Journey have all been worth a seven days' run, and that's saying a good deal.

Mr. Alistair Cooke has been busy in America. He has come back with some astonishing recordings of American folk-songs. He has arranged these under some dozen subjects, such as Negroes, Go West Young Man, the Railroads and the Big City, and has threaded them up with short descriptions of the historical movements they represent. Some of the records are the good old songs at their best. Clementine, Casey Jones and Frankie and Johnny sung in their fruity mother tongue. But others are almost incredible. A convict gang grunting out a dirge. A gang of sweating negroes laying a railway track in the South, and the foreman wails his exhortations above the clang of the metal. A disappointed hobo romances on his Big Rock Candy Mountains. Dope songs, cowboy songs, river songs. All these have very little to do with the America we know, the land of Edgar G. Hoover or Damon Runyan or President Roosevelt, but it flashes up a picture of the American people that I can never forget. This is folk-song in a terribly literal meaning of the words. Nothing to do with Mock Morris and Hey Nonny Nonny, but the sighs and aspirations of real people. Does nothing like it exist here? Are we, as a race compared with the polyglot Americans, dead from the larynx up? If we are not, it is suprising that Mr. Grierson or Mr. Bridson have not made use of similar sources.

Mr. Cooke also had his hand in the production of *Job to be Done*, a documentary of American industry written for the Columbia Workshop by Pare Lorentz. It was produced here by Laurence Gilliam, as nearly as possible, exactly as it was done in New York. Americans with genuine Texas, Alabama, Kansas and Massachusetts accents were selected to play the parts.

To the British public that only knows America through Hollywood this feature must have offered a new experience. It tried to show a picture of the character of American industry. After a lot of description and statistics you get a close-up of an automobile plant. There is a drop in sales. Cut down production. Lay off workers. One of these unwanted workers, numbered 7790 when he applies for relief, sets off West in search of better times. Stopping at a filling station in Kansas, he chats with other job-hunters heading North, South, East and West. The picture they present is pretty gloomy. Suddenly 7790 becomes inspired with a propaganding spirit for the Government, and in spite of all objections such as one that you "can't eat the Boulder Dam", works himself into a frenzy of optimism, affirming that a society which has changed the course of rivers and blown up mountains will also be able to feed its people. Briefly, that is the story. Good documentary material. I guess it would have made a good script for a short film. In fact Pare Lorentz knows how to make a good picture, witness his *The Plow That Broke the Plains* and *The River*. But there is a difference between film and radio.

The best effects in radio, being essentially a *home* medium, are achieved by *intimacy*. The medium does not lend itself to shouting and declamation. Therefore, you can either employ an agent, like Harry Hopeful, who will draw the story out of the other characters, and with whom the listener identifies himself; or else your characters must address the microphone in such a manner that the listener is persuaded that the story is being told to him personally. In film, where the camera generally plays the role of eavesdropper, there is no occasion for such intimate treatment. Apply this standard to *Job to be Done*, and you would see that its technique is unsuitable for radio. The characters never talk to each other; they speak in dialogue form, but in fact that take turns in addressing the whole wide world. Mr. Lorentz would probably say that he tried to be objective and to make his characters represent types. Unfortunately the effect of that method is to weaken the emotional hold on the listener. You can only get a hold on your listener by making him identify himself with your characters. And you can only do that by intimacy, by letting your characters talk as man to man, about the little things in their jobs, their jokes, their hopes and disappointments.

Mr. Bridson can do this to perfection and that is why his programmes sound so unusual. *Job to be Done* should be taken as a warning to producers who attempt to apply documentary film methods to radio in too mechanical a way.

The third programme for which Mr. Cooke is responsible is entitled *The Day and the Tune*. His idea is to invite listeners to submit their reasons for having a strong association of ideas with any popular tune. The subject obviously lends itself to sentiment and Mr. Cooke is apparently being swamped with honeymoon airs. But there are others. A Yorkshire farmer, for instance had a nervous cow that would only let him milk her if he whistled the tune of Killarney!

A year ago last May we wrote here that B.B.C. announcers had become "but shadows, poor anonymous abstractions, tied to a script". We deplored the change from the early days of broadcasting when an announcement by Rex Palmer or Cecil Lewis was something more than a reading of words. We pleaded for an announcer who was an *individual*, and not a mere voice. The B.B.C. has now changed its policy in this respect. Announcers are being written up in the "Radio Times." Even their hobbies and home life are being dragged out! The change is for the better, but if they swing too far the other way listeners may begin to suspect a motive.

●

George Audit

FILM GUIDE

Shorts

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (Puppets in Gasparcolour).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Slatinay and George Pal.

BELFAST: Crumlin	Sept. 5, 3 days
CHEADLE: Osborne	Sept. 5, 3 days
LEEDS: Gainsboro'	Sept. 8, 3 days
NEWMILLS: Picture House	Sept. 16, 2 days
NORTH SHIELDS: Comedy	Sept. 29, 3 days
STANDISH: Palace	Sept. 15, 3 days
TOW LAW: Palace	Sept. 8, 3 days
WETHERBY: Picture House	Sept. 15, 3 days

Coal Face (Poetic treatment of coal-mining).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit.
SOUND PRODUCTION: Alberto Cavalcanti.

TILBURY: Palace	Sept. 1, 3 days
VICTORIA: News Theatre	Sept. 12, 3 days

Cover to Cover (Documentary of book production).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Alexander Shaw.

ANSTRUTHER: Regal	Sept. 15, 3 days
NEWCASTLE: Gem	Sept. 19, 3 days
NEWCASTLE: Picturedrome	Sept. 22, 2 days
RUSH: Savoy	Sept. 15, 2 days
VICTORIA: News Theatre	Sept. 26, 4 days

Down to the Sea.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BIRKENHEAD: Gaumont	Sept. 5, 6 days
BISHOPS STORTFORD: Phœnix	Sept. 5, 3 days
EGREMONT: Gaumont Palace	Sept. 5, 6 days
KIRKCALDY: Rialto	Sept. 15, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Gaumont, Princes Park	Sept. 19, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Magnet	Sept. 8, 3 days
SOUTHAMPTON: Plaza	Sept. 1, 7 days

Islands of the Bounty (Islands associated with the famous mutiny).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.

ADLINGTON: Cinema	Sept. 15, 3 days
ARDROSSAN: Lyric	Sept. 1, 2 days
BELFAST: Alhambra	Sept. 15, 3 days
BELFAST: New Princess	Sept. 19, 3 days
KIRBYMOORSIDE: Electric	Sept. 1, 2 days
LARNE: Regal	Sept. 8, 3 days
MONAGHAN: Town Hall	Sept. 8, 3 days
MOSTON: M.I.P.	Sept. 15, 4 days
NEWTON STEWART: Picture House	Sept. 8, 2 days
VICTORIA: News Theatre	Sept. 22, 4 days

Lancashire Lakeland (Scenic beauties of Lakeland).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Pennine Films Ltd.

CLEVELEYS: Odeon	Sept. 22, 3 days
LONDON: Blue Hall, Edgware Road	Sept. 12, 7 days
LONDON: State, Thornton Heath	Sept. 19, 7 days
WEYMOUTH: Regent	Sept. 4, 1 day

Land o' Clans.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BISHOPS STORTFORD: Regent	Sept. 26, 6 days
DUNDEE: Empire	Sept. 22, 3 days
DUNDEE: Odeon	Sept. 22, 3 days
GLOSSOP: Empire	Sept. 26, 3 days
LONDON: Blue Hall, Edgware Road	Sept. 19, 7 days
NEW BRIGHTON: Trocadero	Sept. 22, 3 days
PRESTWICH: Odeon	Sept. 12, 3 days
SHIRLEY: Odeon	Sept. 5, 6 days
SHREWSBURY: Granada	Sept. 12, 6 days
SUTTON COLDFIELD: Odeon	Sept. 5, 6 days
TONBRIDGE: Capitol	Sept. 5, 6 days

Land of the Marimba.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BARROW: Regal	Sept. 19, 6 days
BARNSLEY: Princess	Sept. 29, 3 days
CARLISLE: City	Sept. 26, 3 days
CHORLEY: Odeon	Sept. 19, 6 days
CLEVELEYS: Odeon	Sept. 18, 4 days
DENNISTOUN: Picture House	Sept. 8, 3 days

FILMS
at the
TATLER THEATRE
Charing Cross Road

Sept. 5	*North Sea* *Highlands of Rhodesia* *New Audioscopics*
Sept. 12	*Kings in Exile* (G.B.I.)
Sept. 26	*Tale of Two Abbeys* *The Ship That Died* *Fruit in Jamaica*

GLOSSOP: Empire	Sept. 19, 3 days
GOVANHILL: Picture House	Sept. 1, 3 days
LANCASTER: County	Sept. 26, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Corona	Sept. 5, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Empress	Sept. 12, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Magnet	Sept. 12, 6 days
LONDON: World News, Praed Street	Sept. 15, 3 days
MANSFIELD: Rock	Sept. 29, 3 days
PRESTWICH: Odeon	Sept. 5, 3 days
SOWERBY BRIDGE: Electric	Sept. 15, 3 days
WAKEFIELD: Carlton	Sept. 29, 3 days

Low Commotion.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

DUNOON: La Scala	Sept. 1, 3 days
NORTHAMPTON: Exchange	Sept. 5, 6 days
MALVERN: Theatre	Sept. 22, 3 days
TONBRIDGE: Capitol	Sept. 12, 6 days

Mountain Barriers.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BIRKENHEAD: Gaumont	Sept. 26, 6 days
CARLISLE: City	Sept. 29, 3 days
CHICHESTER: Gaumont	Sept. 19, 3 days
CLEVELEYS: Odeon	Sept. 29, 3 days
DORCHESTER: Palace	Sept. 29, 3 days
DUMFRIES: Regal	Sept. 22, 3 days
GLOSSOP: Empire	Sept. 5, 3 days
GOVANHILL: Picture House	Sept. 15, 3 days
GREENOCK: Regal	Sept. 26, 3 days
HINCKLEY: Odeon	Sept. 29, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Casino	Sept. 8, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Plaza	Sept. 5, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Gaumont, Princes Park	Sept. 15, 3 days
MANSFIELD: Empire	Sept. 22, 3 days
MORECAMBE: Odeon	Sept. 4, 7 days
MONMOUTH: Picture House	Sept. 22, 3 days
PORTSMOUTH: Theatre Royal	Sept. 18, 7 days
ROCHESTER: Majestic	Sept. 4, 1 day
ST. ANDREWS: New Picture House	Sept. 26, 3 days
WEYBRIDGE: Odeon	Sept. 11, 1 day
WEYMOUTH: Regent	Sept. 5, 6 days

Night Mail (Documentary of the northward trip of the postal special).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Basil Wright, Harry Watt.

HAMPSTEAD: Playhouse	Sept. 11, 1 day
MILLSTREET: Cinema	Sept. 1, 2 days
MITCHELSTOWN: Grand Central	Sept. 18, 3 days
PONTEFRACT: Alexandra	Sept. 15, 3 days
STOCKPORT: Queens	Sept. 12, 2 days

People in the Parks.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Paul Burnford.

BESWICK: Mosley	Sept. 12, 6 days
CARNFORTH: Roxy	Sept. 1, 3 days
CARNOUSTIE: Pavilion	Sept. 23, 2 days
HIPSWELL: Camp	Sept. 12, 3 days
KINGSWOOD: Ambassadors	Sept. 1, 3 days
KIRBYMOORSIDE: Electric	Sept. 15, 2 days
MURTON: Empire	Sept. 5, 3 days
NORTH SHIELDS: Rex	Sept. 29, 3 days
NORTHENDON: Coronation	Sept. 5, 6 days
SOUTH MOOR: Tivoli	Sept. 22, 3 days
WARRINGTON: Odeon	Sept. 15, 3 days
WETHERBY: Picture House	Sept. 22, 3 days

Picture People.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BEBINGTON: Rialto	Sept. 12, 6 days
CARLISLE: City	Sept. 26, 3 days
GOOLE: Cinema Palace	Sept. 12, 3 days
HULL: Monica	Sept. 5, 3 days
LEEDS: Western Talkies	Sept. 8, 3 days
LONDON: World News, Praed Street	Sept. 5, 3 days
MANSFIELD: Empire	Sept. 19, 3 days

Power.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

AIGBURTH: Rivoli	Sept. 8, 3 days
BELLSHILL: Picture Theatre	Sept. 8, 3 days
BIRKENHEAD: Plaza	Sept. 29, 3 days
CINDERFORD: Palace	Sept. 22, 3 days
GAINSBOROUGH: Grand	Sept. 15, 3 days
LONDON: World News, Praed Street	Sept. 8, 3 days
TONBRIDGE: Star	Sept. 1, 3 days
WAKEFIELD: Empire	Sept. 29, 3 days

Sky High.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

BLACKPOOL: Jubilee	Sept. 8, 3 days
CROYDON: Savoy	Sept. 4, 1 day

Shorts (contd.)

LONDON: Blue Hall, Edgware Road
Sept. 5, 7 days
LONDON: World News, Praed Street
Sept. 8, 3 days
LONDON: Rex, Norbury Sept. 18, 1 day
LONDON: State, Thornton Heath
Sept. 15, 3 days

Town and Gown.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

ALDERSHOT: Alexandra	Sept. 5, 6 days
CARLISLE: City	Sept. 22, 3 days
HIGH WYCOMBE: Majestic	Sept. 12, 3 days
HOVE: Lido	Sept. 4, 7 days
LONDON: Eros, Piccadilly Circus	Sept. 8, 6 days
RADCLIFFE: Odeon	Sept. 15, 3 days
WESTBURY: Vista	Sept. 5, 6 days
WINCHESTER: Royal	Sept. 26, 3 days

Tropical Springtime (Travelogue on Costa Rica).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.
PRODUCTION: Cedric Mallabey.

BATH: News Theatre	Sept. 12, 3 days
CARLISLE: City	Sept. 19, 3 days
CINDERFORD: Palace	Sept. 8, 3 days
DORCHESTER: Palace	Sept. 5, 3 days
DUNOON: La Scala	Sept. 19, 3 days

To-day We Live (The depressed areas of Wales).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: Ralph Bond and R. I. Grierson.

GATESHEAD: Ravensworth	Sept. 1, 3 days
GIBRALTAR: H.M.S. Cormorant	Sept. 5, 21 days
KIRBYMOORSIDE: Electric	Sept. 1, 2 days
SOUTH MOOR: Tivoli	Sept. 22, 3 days
STROMNESS: Cinema	Sept. 6, 8 & 10, 3 days
WIGTON: Palace	Sept. 29, 3 days

Valleys of Romance.
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph.

ALCESTER: Regent	Sept. 5, 3 days
BARROW: Regal	Sept. 12, 6 days
BIRKENHEAD: Plaza	Sept. 1, 3 days
CARLISLE: City	Sept. 8, 3 days
CINDERFORD: Palace	Sept. 12, 3 days
DALKEITH: Pavilion	Sept. 26, 3 days
DORCHESTER: Palace	Sept. 19, 3 days
FRASERBURGH: Picture House	Sept. 29, 3 days
LANCASTER: County	Sept. 19, 6 days
LINLITHGOW: Empire	Sept. 15, 3 days

Way to the Sea (Documentary of the roads and railways from London to the coast).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films.
DIRECTION: J. B. Holmes.

ADLINGTON: Cinema	Sept. 15, 3 days
BAMBER BRIDGE: Empire	Sept. 1, 4 days
BRADFORD: Elite	Sept. 19, 3 days
BURNHOPE: Miners	Sept. 30, 2 days
ECCLESFIELD: Cinema	Sept. 1, 3 days
GRANGEVILLA: Pavilion	Sept. 1, 3 days
INVERURIE: Victoria	Sept. 16, 2 days
KIRBYMOORSIDE: Electric	Sept. 15, 2 days
MURTON: Olympia	Sept. 8, 3 days

Weather Forecast.
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
NEWCASTLE: News Theatre Sept. 12, 6 days

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N. I. Dorokhin
I. R. Peltser
N. N. Ribnikov
LONDON: Academy Indefinitely

Uncle Moses (Yiddish)
PRODUCTION: Yiddish Talking Pictures
DIRECTOR: Aubrey Scotto
STARRING: Maurice Schwartz
Judith Abarbanell
LONDON: Academy Indefinitely
(after *The Last Night*)

L'Homme a Abattre (French)
DIRECTOR: Leon Mathot
STARRING: Jean Murat
Viviane Romance
LONDON: Berkeley Indefinitely
(from Aug. 29)

Extase
DIRECTOR: Gustav Machaty
STARRING: Hedy Lamarr
Aribert Mog
LONDON: Forum Indefinitely

The Emperor of California (German)
DIRECTOR: Luis Trenker
STARRING: Luis Trenker
Viktoria von Ballasko
Reginald Pasch
LONDON: Studio One Indefinitely

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Television

From 'And Now', the new B.B.C. book on Television

HAD there been a television set in the middle of Exmoor there might have been more to this review of August's programmes. But that is a fact which, in itself, is not without interest. Had the B.B.C. been able to bend these rather intractable television waves round to Exmoor, I should have been treated to drama, music and cabaret, and I must honestly ask myself just how much of this I wanted, and equally honestly I must answer myself that on Exmoor I want no cabarets, nor one-act plays by anybody—not even by the B.B.C. This may seem a rather superficial observation, and maybe it is. It is rather obvious that I do not want cabarets on the moors, but I think there is more to it than that.

I am not a Londoner, and though I live in London, there is a whole lot that London generously offers me but in which I am not the least interested—and that goes for the Test Match, too. It goes for cockney comedians in general, and for most of them in particular. It goes for a scad of things that happen on rivers. When I am in the country, in the Midlands and north of the Border, radio hunts me out. Southern English accents follow me into the back streets of Manchester and pierce the blue calm of an evening on the Forth. And I do not like it. I like it even less when more than an accent follows me—when Piccadilly, Big Ben and the London Casino push their way into my provincial peacefulness. Let us be generous to the B.B.C. and admit that they have been good enough to give the provinces and the other kingdoms their local programmes. Having admitted it, that is really all we need to do, for the National programme still floods the provinces and the Regionals carry a London emphasis and an Oxford accent.

But, with television, all is changed. For the moment it seems as though London will have to talk to London and be satisfied: Manchester will talk to Manchester and all the others to all the others, and there is a fair possibility that local colour will have its day. And I think we shall be all the better for it. No matter how grandiosely we talk of the breaking down of barriers, the arts do not really carry very far. It is not the physical barriers of space that offer the resistance, but the mass censorships of tradition and the homogeneous identity in a community of interests. Music carries a good way, and some humour, but the everyday affections and the daily dignities of language and deportment are too domestic to be broadcast widely with great success.

The daily economies do not stand being thrown around either. Not so long ago I was trying to puzzle this problem out in terms of American radio. There, the whole issue is writ much larger, and I came across this illustration. A well-meaning young lady in Chicago broadcast a series of cookery talks on the network. This meant she was talking not merely to the housewives of her city, but to the housewives of that whole gigantic land. Faithfully she told them to take their so much of flour, water, an egg, baking powder and that pinch of salt, and stir them up. Put it in the oven. Just as faithfully, some thousands of good housewives all over the States obeyed the instructions. For a lot of them, things went all right, and in due course the dainty dish came out of the oven, brown and crisp. But for a village or two eight thousand feet up in the Rocky Mountains it was not so good. Loud explosions, accompanied the scattering of frothy lumps of dough to the four winds. Eight thousand feet up means a whole new set of pressures, and Chicago recipes just won't work. At eight thousand feet water boils at 80-odd degrees, and you need to take a deal of trouble to boil an egg. The B.B.C.'s troubles are less spectacular than this, but perhaps for that reason need closer examination. Making a meal of Cornish pasties and Devonshire cream and cider, with lingering memories of hot-pots and Irish stew, I was quite glad that Monsieur Boulestin's cooking demonstration did not carry down to Exmoor.

Even within the regions, the B.B.C. is going to have quite a job selecting its material.

Television is still at its best when it is reporting from the outside, and there is here a chance to do that service of minute reporting of local life and happenings which many critics have been asking of the B.B.C. Amplified by my above provincial remarks, I predict this to be television's strong point all along, and again recommend the B.B.C. producers to think along these lines. I do wish to be reasonable about this, for two reasons—(1) significant outside broadcasts occur during the daytime, and with the exception of Saturday and Sunday, I take it that these day-time hours are not the most popular viewing times; and (2), I saw the broadcast of a shove-halfpenny game. This was something quite remarkable in my viewing experience. It had all the spontaneity of life for which "In Town To-night" has striven and never quite achieved. It had, first of all, the excitement of any real game. I could clearly see every move (or is it shove?). I felt the participants were real, that they were really playing to win, and there was not the smell of a script, nor the slightest evidence of rehearsed dialogue. And this is just as things should be. I can commend Mr. Charles Garner to the ears, eyes and hearts of all viewers. Do not miss him.

The excellent camera work on "The End of the Beginning", by Sean O'Casey made a rather poor and over-acted play at least interesting, and the technical endeavour of "Thank you, Mr. Ghost", had it been achieved, would have brought some distinction to a play so pseudo-metaphysical that even Mr. Priestley would have shut off. "King of the Congo", a travesty with some good light music, had some good material. It was a take-off of the jungle film, and using the Pete Smith technique, it played old Harry with cannibals, missionaries and lonely eyrie in the treetops. Again, borrowing from Pete Smith, the incongruous sound effects were effective and the film cuts of wild animals rallying to Marzipan's call were amusing the first time. Cut down by about seven minutes and with about another three good gags, this item would have been beyond reproach.

Preparations for Radiolympia have clearly robbed August's programmes of meat. With Radiolympia, television makes its first full-dress bow to the public, and as we go to press, the curtain is rising on specially-prepared items and new sets, including some cheap ones. Viewers at Olympia will see the B.B.C.'s offering at its biggest and best. After you have sampled the goods, tell us what you think.

Thomas Baird

Sound

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FILMOSOUND 120J, a 750 watt Filmosound that has everything required by the busy travelling sales representative, teachers, lecturers, etc. There is a still picture clutch and reverse gear. It has two speeds so that both sound and silent film can be shown. The improved amplifier provides 25 watts of undistorted output with even greater fidelity than before. Take-up mechanism and cleverly designed to require no changing of belts to run reels of various sizes. **Now reduced to £195.**

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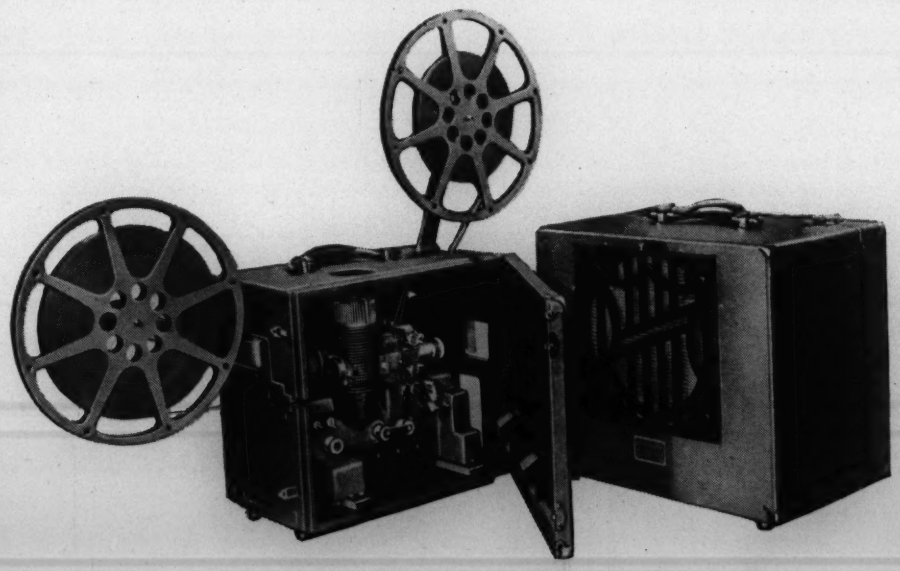

FILMOSOUND 138M2 is the Bell-Howell answer to the demand for an enclosed 138. It is a two-case job, with its projector fully enclosed in a "blimp" case. The second case contains a 12-inch speaker. The projector provides both clutch and reverse, and may be used for silent as well as sound films. Particularly suitable for use where audience and projector occupy the same room.
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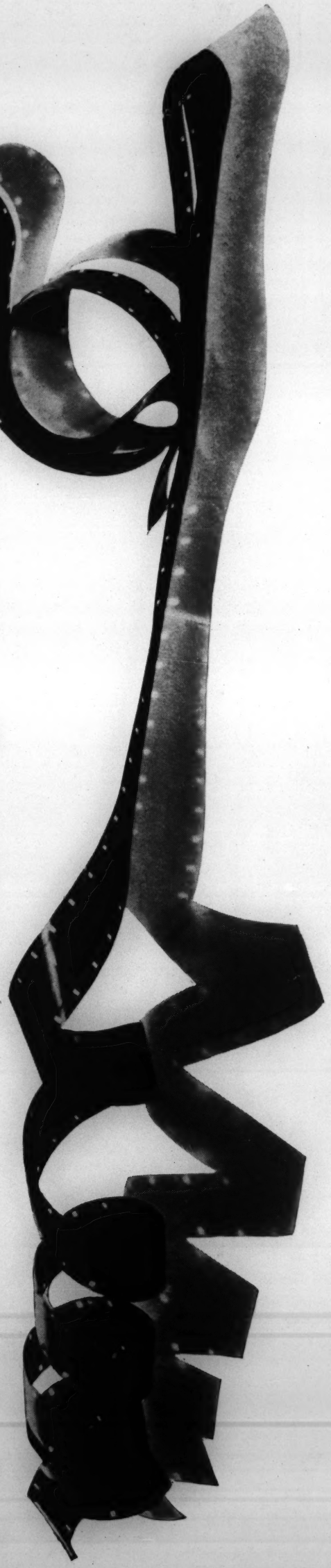

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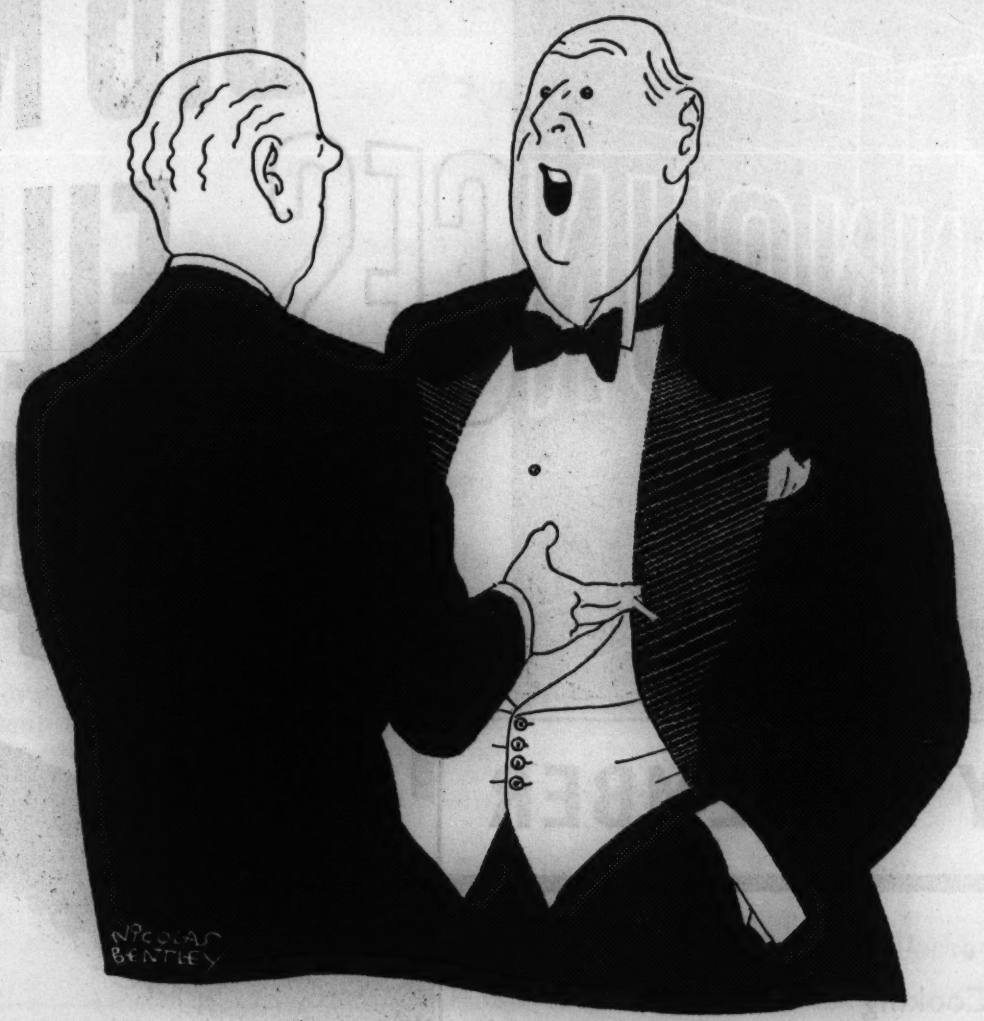
Some phrases seldom ring true

"In my humble opinion"



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